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Gifts rooted in tradition

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BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Page 3 Nation needs Rh-negative

China has long depended on its foreign residents to provide life-saving Rh-negative blood to patients. But even in an increasingly international Beijing, the blood remains scarce.



Pages 20-21 Terraces of Guilin

In addition to famous mountains, rivers and lakes, Guilin has another feature that makes it look like paradise: the centuries-old rice terraces and hamlets of the Yao and Zhuang people.

What is happiness?

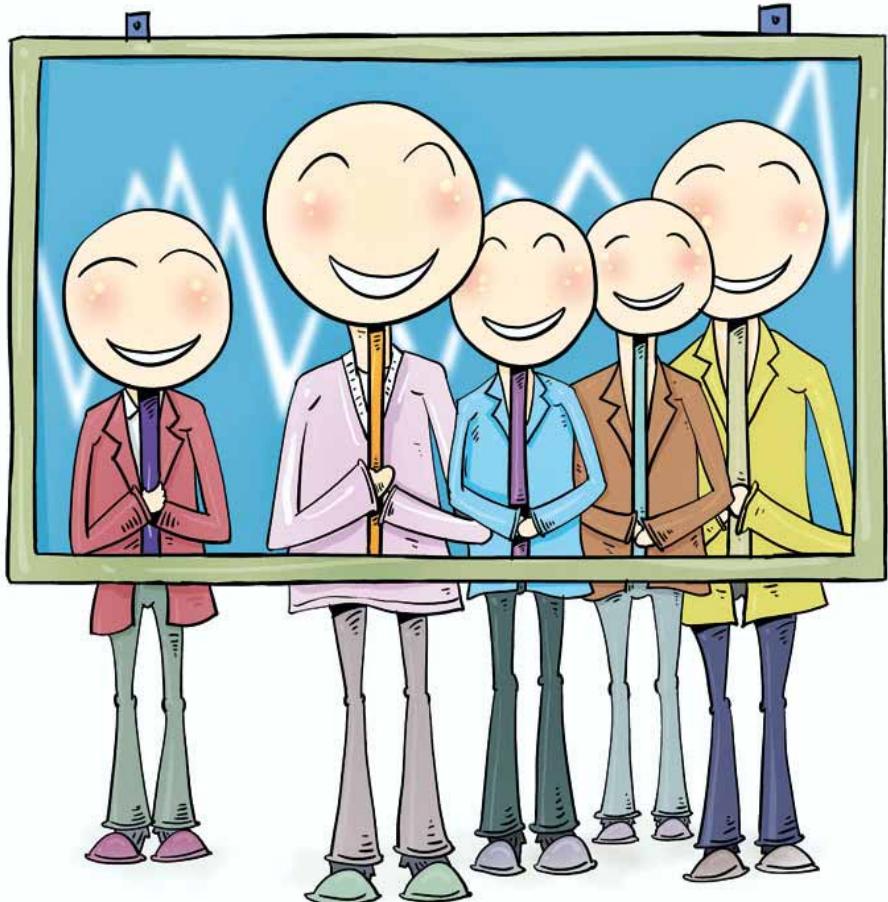
Survey results on China's happiness seem to be entirely contradictory.

The most recent Pew Global Attitudes survey found that 87 percent of Chinese people surveyed were satisfied with where the country is going, making it the most satisfied country of all it surveyed.

But a European Union survey ranked China 128th out of 150 countries in terms of happiness.

What's the real story?

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US students flood China for education

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Promises of a Peking Opera reborn

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Revision narrows the power, length of state secrets

By Han Manman

County-level cities are forbidden to adjust the confidentiality of issues without permission from above, according to new revisions to the law. As of October 1, only provincial and municipal governments will have the power to classify information as a state secret.

The Law of China on Guarding State Secrets, amended for the first time since it was issued in 1989, defines state secrets as information concerning state security and interests that, if leaked, would damage state security and interests in the areas of politics, economy and national defense.

The new law limits all state secrets to a maximum of 30 years of being sealed: 20 years as a secret and 10 years as a confidential article. After 30 years, the information must be opened to the public if requested.

Wang Xixin, a professor at Peking University Law School, said the new law will help reduce the number of state secrets by preventing lower levels of government from applying

the classification.

Local officials often brand things as "state secrets" to evade public inquiry, he said.

"It will help boost government transparency," Wang said, adding that governments at the county level would be forced to respond to questioning.

He said the revision would also enhance China's international image, as an excess of state secrets works to damage its credibility abroad.

The law also requires Internet companies and telecommunications operators to cooperate with authorities when investigating any leaks of state secrets. If the companies discover a public network has been used to publish the information they will be required by law to report it, cut off access and preserve all activity records.

Such stipulations are necessary, as the rapid transmission of information can easily cause leaks of state secrets. Many countries place similar requirements on network operators," Wang said.



The new state secrets law took effect on October 1.

CFP Photo

Student entrepreneurs work to improve rural life

By Liang Meilan

To compete in this year's entrepreneurship challenge, college students will have to get creative about helping rural and disadvantaged groups.

The competition, started September 27 at China Youth University for Political Sciences, is putting 10 groups from 10 universities to the test. Their entrepreneurial ideas must be innovative, feasible, profitable and socially beneficial.

But most importantly, they must offer real help to people who need it.

Li Wenjia, group leader of last year's winning project, said the challenge is a valuable chance for college students who care.

"Those born in the '80s and '90s are going to wield major social power within the next decade. It's our turn to pay attention to social problems and take responsibility for making this world a better place for everyone to live," she said.

Last year's winning project was a portable house made of used containers. "We came up with the idea when we saw the spike in housing prices. Since migrant workers new to the city can't afford even a 5-square-meter flat, we designed these low-cost transitional homes so they could at least have a warm shelter," she said.

Li's group faced many challenges during the project, the toughest of which was managing the money.

"When we finalized our business plan, we saw that it would



Li Wenjia displays the portable house made out of used containers.

Photo provided by Li Wenjia

take 8 million yuan to execute. When we started out, we were expecting to need only 300 yuan," she said.

They also overcame problems with the technology and relevant laws.

"We had to choose materials that were safe to use when building a living environment and design an efficient drainage system and lightning. After that, we ran into trouble because the law never spells out whether these kinds of homes are legal or illegal," she said.

Li Jiahua, vice president of China Youth University for Political Sciences, spoke highly of the challenge, saying it offers a valuable platform for college students to realize their ideas with the finances and support of corporate experts.

"Entrepreneurship is increasingly important to the economy. Through the challenge, university students are getting a chance

to take initiative on their own. I think that after they graduate, these students will be more prepared to compete in a globalized world," he said.

Youth Business China (YBC), one of the supporters, has already backed 1,380 student projects.

"We opened our charity to universities because their startups are unlike traditional ones. They have great ideas, and some of them may even be practical. The only problem is they don't have any experience managing a group, lack capital or know little about finance," said Zhang Huiling, director of YBC.

And it's in these areas YBC can help.

This year's scholarship is being organized by Cheung Kong Design Research Center, Know 'Bout Business (KAB) Entrepreneurship Education Research Center, Beijing Youth Daily and Make a Difference (MAD).

Federation pushes for more unions, pay

By Zhao Hongyi

The establishment of new unions is on the municipal government's 2013 agenda, according to sources from the Municipal Federation of Trade Unions.

"The best housekeepers can earn 6,400 yuan per month," Zou Xin, a housekeeper who signed the agreement, said. "The agreement says our employer must raise the annual income for housekeepers by 10 percent or more."

The federation requires 60 percent of the enterprises and companies in Beijing, including foreign ones, to have workers' unions with 82 percent membership. It is advancing those numbers to 75 percent and 87 percent in 2011, and then 90 percent and 92 percent by 2012.

"We want to have a proper system for salary negotiation in place by 2012 to protect employee benefits," Yuan Zenguo, vice chairman of the federation, said.

The change is part of a central government initiative to double employee salaries within the next several years, he said.

Across the country, the gap between rich and poor is widening.

Earlier this year, 16 employees at Foxconn's Shenzhen plant committed suicide, perhaps in part because of their low income. Employees said their 1,300-yuan pay was not enough to support life in a coastal city.

Foxconn is moving part of its assembly process to Henan Province, where the cost of living is lower. The scandal exposed just how little incomes have grown at China's lowest levels.

Starting in 2012, workers' unions will be charged with pushing employers to make sure employee incomes rise to keep up with inflation.

Beijing ran several tests of the negotiation procedures last month.

On September 2, an agreement was reached between employers and

workers to increase pay at the Haidian housekeeping center. The 6,500 housekeepers registered with the center's eight companies will be reevaluated based on their skills.

"The best housekeepers can earn 6,400 yuan per month," Zou Xin, a housekeeper who signed the agreement, said. "The agreement says our employer must raise the annual income for housekeepers by 10 percent or more."

The municipal federation urges enterprises and companies to share profits with their workers. "Some have a hard time functioning, but we push them to pay their employees fully and on time," Yuan said.

The federation also requires its branches to contact foreign-invested enterprises to urge them to set up unions. "If they hesitate, we must find out why and persuade them," Yuan said.

Beijing Foreign Enterprise Human Resources Service (FESCO), the leading agent providing human resources to foreign enterprises and agencies, set up a workers' union in May. It is inviting all employees in foreign-invested companies, including representative offices, institutions and organizations, to join.

But netizens and workers were pessimistic about salary increases.

"If your job is an iron rice bowl (a government job), you might be able to say something. But the message is clear to anyone who works at a private or foreign-invested company: shut up and work harder," netizen Pang Sanpeng said.

"The idea is good, but they need to publish real details about how they plan to do this. The labor market still favors the employer," another netizen said.

Capital's expats bleed for Rh-negative patients

Lives save by expat blood

The two-day drive attracted 45 foreign donors, seven of whom had Rh-negative blood.

For a long time China has depended on foreign residents to provide life-saving Rh-negative blood to Chinese patients. In April, 140 foreigners during the Expatriate Show donated a combined 227 units (200 milliliter per unit) of blood. Among those volunteers were 17 Rh-negative donors.

Beijing is the country's capital of Rh-negative blood. Patients from all over the country journey here to seek treatment their local Red Cross is unable to provide.

But even in Beijing, only one blood bank supplies Rh-negative blood to the Red Cross, and thousands of hospitals depend on it.

Yu Fen, a woman from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, came to Beijing to give birth to her child in Beijing Union Hospital — one of the only state hospitals in the country with its own Rh-negative reserves.

This March Yu began showing signs of a premature delivery. Doctors told her she would need surgery, but the hospital did not have enough Rh-negative blood to supply the mother and baby.

The hospital called Beijing Red Cross Center, and the center called Beijing United Family Hospital. Using its patient database, the hospital found five foreigners with Rh-negative blood and asked them to come in for an emergency donation.

"Four hours later, the doctors told me that three people had come forward and donated enough blood," Yu said.

The presence or absence of the D antigen in blood tends to be specific to certain ethnic groups. In Western Europe, as much as 15 percent of the population lacks the D antigen resulting in Rh-negative blood.

"Foreigners tend to be more educated about the importance of blood donation, especially those with Rh-negative blood. They are never reluctant to help in China," Sun Fei, the doctor in charge of the Beijing United Family Hospital Blood Center, said.

Stocking the blood bank

United Family Hospital is one of the most popular private hospitals in the expat community. It has held six blood drives each year since 2008.

One of the foreign donors who saved Yu was Mustafa Ali al Humaid, headmaster of the Saudi Arabia School in Beijing.

"Whenever there is a need for blood, we will give. We do not consider ourselves foreigners because the world is a big family," al Humaid said.

Since 2008, the Saudi Arabia School has been organizing staff to take part in the annual free blood donation camp held by United Family Hospital and the Beijing Red Cross Blood Center.

Al Humaid and his colleagues are listed donors at the blood center, which has been calling on the public — especially ethnic Europeans — to

By Chu Meng

In China, the shortage of Rh-negative blood is a special concern.

Only three out of every thousand Chinese people are born with blood that lacks the D antigen. However, in much of Europe, negative blood types are seen in 15 percent of the population.

But for how rare Rh-negative blood is in China, rarer still are the people who realize their lives may depend on the goodwill of Beijing's expatriates.

Seeking to refill its dwindling stocks of Rh-negative blood, Beijing United Family Hospital, Chaoyang Blood Administration Center and the Beijing Red Cross teamed up for a blood drive last weekend at Sanlitun Village.

Healthy candidates between the ages of 18 and 55 were allowed to donate after presenting a photo ID. All Rh-negative blood collected during the drive will be frozen and shipped to the Beijing Red Cross to supply it through the next five years.



Expatriate donors are Beijing's primary source of Rh-negative blood.

Photos provided by Beijing United Family Hospital

but also for millions of foreign visitors in Beijing," he said.

Since then, the demand for Rh-negative blood has only increased.

The US Embassy in Beijing is another frequent donor. It has partnered with United Family Hospital and the Chaoyang Blood Administration Center to hold regular blood drives on the embassy grounds where American diplomats, embassy staff and volunteers donate.

"I am really glad to see the US Embassy exercising civic responsibility in China. Whoever the blood goes to — Chinese or foreigners — it is still our obligation to donate," said Larry Padgett, a doctor at the US Embassy's Regional Medical Office.

Still short on Rh-negative

Despite the amount of blood collected during the drives, the country's Rh-negative reserves remain dangerously short.

"Beijing planned to have 800 of the 200-ml units of Rh-negative before the Olympics. By the opening ceremony it had collected only half of that," Shi Weiwei, deputy director of the Beijing Red Cross Blood Center, said.

The center opened a separate wing for Rh-negative blood donation in 2001. So far, it has registered 300 local residents willing to donate blood if needed, but they cannot meet even a fourth of the need, Shi said.

With the local donation group shrinking and the demand for blood increasing, Rh-negative



Expatriates are registered to donate blood during a Community Blood Drive event in Beijing.



Many foreigners are willing to donate, but the Chinese language procedures can be intimidating.

come and donate if they have Rh-negative blood.

The school began participating in the donation drives shortly before the Olympic Games in 2008. When al Humaid learned that 500,000

foreign visitors were expected to visit Beijing and the city's blood banks were not prepared, he and others stepped up to the challenge.

"We knew our donations would not only be crucial for local people,

blood could pose a problem at international events.

"Beijing is continuing to open up to the world, so the population of foreign nationals living here is bound to grow. There is a lot of pressure for us to build up a reserve," Shi said.

Sun said the shortage is due both to a lack of Chinese donors and cultural roadblocks keeping out many foreign donors.

"Many foreigners have difficulties with the language or finding somewhere to donate," Sun said.

Chinese-speaking foreigners can donate at any of the shopping centers that have a blood bus. The Red Cross Blood Center also has a special room for healthy donors.

Another option is the periodic blood drives held by United Family Hospital. The next drive is scheduled at the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel on October 6.

"However, future drives will be ambulatory according to the need," Sun said.

Ana, a Tongan student at China Foreign Affairs University, said she donated once in the US but was apprehensive about donating blood in China.

"I have concerns about the safety of it — especially the cleanliness of the needles and general sanitation. I may try in the future if there is some official collection effort," she said.

Sun said all blood drives handled by Beijing hospitals are safe and that donors shouldn't worry about sanitation.

Gome founder's ousting renews nationalist fervor

By Huang Daohen

China's erstwhile richest man, Huang Guangyu – now its richest inmate – failed to win back his company Gome. On September 28, 52 percent of the retail giant's shareholders voted against the ex-chairman.

The long battle for ownership stirred nationalistic concerns over the power foreign investors wield in Chinese brands. Many are wondering whether there will be another "Gome case," and if so, how to balance out foreign investment in local brands.



File photo dated December 19, 2002 of Gome electronics boss Huang Guangyu.

Bao Fan/IC Photo

Huang loses Gome

The curtain fell last Tuesday on the ownership battle between imprisoned former chairman Huang Guangyu and Gome's current president, Chen Xiao.

Chen, 51, was the victor.

In a 10-minute session of the Special General Meeting held in Hong Kong last Tuesday, nearly 52 percent of the shareholders voted against Huang's proposed ousting of Chen and his group.

The outcome was shocking, as Huang's family controlled 36 percent of Gome. Chen, by contrast, had a 1.6 percent stake in the company: his supporters – Bain Investment, a US private equity firm – controlled but 16 percent.

Xinhua News Agency reported that Huang proposed five resolutions. Only his 4th resolution, which forbade the company's director from issuing new shares, gained any support.

However, the board approved all three of Chen's resolutions and his nominations of three new board members.

Huang issued a statement late that night saying he was saddened by the results. Zou Xiaochun, Huang's lawyer, told a recent press conference that Huang was taking legal action to protect his interests.

Huang and Chen were always close business partners until the two clashed after Beijing police detained Huang in 2008 on suspicion of stock market manipulation.

The board appointed Chen its new chairman in early 2009.

Since then, Chen has been working actively to distance Gome from Huang. He reorganized the company and closed many of its less-profitable retail stores.

Huang's having been sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment drove a final wedge between the two.

In 2008, Chen courted Bain Investment to buy up the shares needed to bolster Gome. Bain paid HK\$3.6 billion (3.1 billion yuan) for a 10 percent stake in Gome, becoming the company's second largest shareholder after Huang.

Gome used to be a family-run business, but Bain's involvement pitted Huang and Chen's factions against each other this May.

"We do not think it is bad to include foreign investors in a company, but we should be treated fairly as its largest shareholder," Huang's family said in a statement.

Money with strings attached

The Gome spat will rattle the relationship between Chinese entrepreneurs and foreign investors, said Zhao Xiao, a leading economics professor.

Many investors from the US and Europe are eager to get involved in China because of the market's explosive growth, but the Chinese entrepreneurs that

once courted foreign investment are growing cautious, Zhao said.

"They are afraid to become the next Huang, who created Gome but lost control of it," he said.

Zhao forecasted similar battles for control of listed companies like Gome, and said their owners should expect power challenges from both domestic managers and from foreign investors.

But Zhao said foreign investment is still essential for Chinese companies that plan to join the global competition.

Nationalist response

The Gome dispute also touched off a new wave of nationalist sentiment on the Internet. Many netizens said they worried that all of China's top brands would end up in foreign hands.

A poll by Sina.com, the most popular news portal, asked Internet users which of Gome's chairmen – Huang or Chen – should head the company. As of press time, 60 percent of the 1.8 million respondents said Huang. A similar survey at QQ.com found that 77 percent supported Huang.

Though Internet polls are hardly scientific, Zhao said the results are consistent with widespread perceptions of Huang, who started from nothing to become the country's youngest self-made billionaire.

Huang, 41, was regarded as an idol. He created Gome when he was 27 and turned his brand into the largest retailer of home appliances.

Huang was ranked the second-richest person in China in 2008 by Forbes Asia, with an estimated net worth of \$2.7 billion. He also topped the Hurun Report as China's richest man in 2004, 2005 and 2008.

But Chen was a virtual unknown before joining Gome. The Shanghai entrepreneur is seen as a faceless businessman working to Americanize Gome together with his conspirators at Bain.

But absurd theories add

unnecessary complication to a simple issue. "The spat was simply a battle for the control of the brand," Zhao said.

Gome was a pivotal brand that drove the growth of retail spending in China. Whoever owns the brand is allowed to open new stores and share in its recognition, he said.

Zhao said that in global economic integration, what matters most to shareholders, management and foreign investors is the brand's market value, not its nationality.

"To win profits by controlling a company is the final aim of any investor," Zhao said.

Investors the usual suspects

But that does little to reassure Chinese investors.

During his years spent researching the effects of foreign investment on Chinese business, Zhao Xiao has found such knee-jerk nationalism common.

And that worries foreign investors.

Zhao said that many Chinese people strongly believe all pollution in the country is the fault of foreign investors who come and manufacture low-end products.

They see the investors as only using China to earn money, rather than having any valid interest in the culture or the adventure of expanding the business overseas, he said.

Is China unhappy?

Gov experiment seeks secrets to happiness



The city of Jiangjin has come up with a list of factors it believes contribute to happiness. Here, residents dance in one of Jiangyin's many public squares. Xie Shen/CFP Photo

Survey results on happiness in China seem to be entirely contradictory. The most recent Pew Global Attitudes survey found that 87 percent of Chinese people surveyed were satisfied with the way things were going in their country, making it the most satisfied country by far out of all they surveyed.

But a European Union survey ranked China 128th out of 150 countries in terms of happiness. And one recent survey of 50,000 college students showed a surprising level of gloom.

But is China really unhappy? And how can it become happier?

An experiment in happiness

"Happy Jiangyin" is the name of this award-winning experiment that won the China Local Government Innovation Award. Instead of just aiming for economic growth, for the past four years this wealthy city in Jiangsu Province has come up with a list of magic ingredients it believes add up to happiness.

Besides health care and employment, it has such diverse targets as how much people should donate to charity (more than \$7.35 per capita each year) and how many doctors there should be (26 per 1,000 people).

In a speech at the conference, Jiangyin's Communist Party committee's head of information, Xu Dongqing, even announced "democracy is good." However, Xu wasn't referring to Western multiparty democracy as it's generally understood.

"The Communist Party is the ruling party, and other parties offer advice and suggestions," he tells NPR. "Under this system, we are trying to further use people's wisdom and suggestions to help the government do better."

In political terms, Jiangyin is aiming for more political participation, without changing the fundamental system, though its indicators do reflect a move away from what some have criticized as China's obsession with economic growth.

If the official statistics are accurate, there have been some achievements: salary growth of 48 percent for urban residents in just four years and a 2 percent drop in rural unemployment to just 2.9 percent.

A Potemkin village or glimpse of the future?

However, it's worth mentioning that Jiangyin is one of the richest places in China. Last year, its average urban disposable income was more than \$11,000 (75,000 yuan): four times higher than the national average. But observers such as sociologist Robb Willer are still ambivalent.

"We saw a lot of things that are unambiguously positive: the construction of civic centers, senior centers, reduction of levels of economic inequality," says Willer, who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley, and has visited Jiangyin.

"But we were left with some questions that we'd be curious about, like how hard is it to become a member of this? What are the barriers to membership that might guard these numbers that are reported [and] keep them very high?" he asks.

It's difficult to know if Jiangyin is a Potemkin village for show – or if this high-profile project may provide a glimpse of what China might look like in the future. And as for knowing whether China really is happy, the psychologists say that even defining happiness in a Chinese context is challenging, let alone measuring happiness there.

Local author

What makes Chinese unhappy?

Author Hei Jian visited 40 countries and tried to find why the Chinese are relatively unhappy.

Lack of beliefs

Most people do not know what their expectations are in life. They simply say, "I do not know what I want." Confucius ate coarse rice, didn't even have pillows when sleeping and used his arms as pillows, but Confucius said, "Happiness is inside." Confucius knew what he wanted, so he was happy.

Always comparing

Chinese like to compare themselves with others. However, when our goal is to be happier than others, we'll find that happiness slips further away.

Unmoved by beauty

We often ignore and are unaware of natural beauty, artistic beauty, spiritual beauty and many other beautiful things in life around us.

Do not know how to give

Zhang Shangying from the Song Dynasty (920-1279) said, "Nothing is happier than the happiness of doing good deeds." Only a person who knows how to give rather than just take can be truly happy.

Too much stress

Chinese people living in cities are under great pressure – work, family, financial, interpersonal, psychological and physical pressures.

Expat's advice

How to lose the blues

Eric Weiner, a former reporter for NPR and the author of *The Geography of Bliss: One Grump's Search for the Happiest Places in the World*, has some advice for the Chinese to lose the blues.

1. Cultivate trust. Psychologists have found it is trust that plays a huge role in a nation's happiness.

2. Embrace failure. The Icelanders can teach us all a lesson. As one Icelandic musician said, "It is better to fail for the right reasons than to succeed for the wrong ones."

3. Make happiness a policy. Not just

in one city but in the entire nation. The tiny Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan has a policy of Gross National Happiness. Every decision the government makes is preceded by this simple question: Will it make people happier? That question, of course, is not always easy to answer, but it's worth asking.

4. Finally, don't think about happiness too much. Happiness is a byproduct of a life lived well, and so is best tackled covertly. Or, as British philosopher John Stuart Mill counseled: "Happiness should be approached sideways ... like a crab."

(Agencies)

6 Tough time for foreign banks

Foreign banks trail domestic rivals

Banks from around the world are flocking to China because of its fast-growing economy. But their financial performance here has not been pretty.

Profits in China for global banks fell sharply last year, according to a report by accounting firm KPMG.



Foreign banks say they have struggled to survive in China due to limiting regulations.

Bao Fan/CFP Photo

Foreign banks lag

The earnings of major foreign banks in China plunged last year even as their domestic rivals turned big profits, according to a recent report by *The Wall Street Journal*.

Profits at the Chinese unit of HSBC Holdings PLC plummeted 60 percent compared to 2008, while Standard Chartered's China unit saw earnings fall 34 percent, it reported, quoting a report by accountants at KPMG.

Profits at JP Morgan Chase's unit in China fell 21 percent, KPMG said. The figures apply only to the banks' Chinese subsidiaries.

Joanna Fielding, chief financial officer at Standard Chartered's unit in China, said narrower net-interest margins and weaker Chinese exports hurt the UK bank's bottom line in China last year.

"Despite these challenges, we continue to build for the long term," she said.

A predecessor of Standard Chartered opened its first China branch 1858. The UK bank now generates more than half of its profits from Asia, but its branch net-

work is relatively small.

A spokesman for HSBC China said 2009 was a "challenging year," largely because of low interest rates. The UK bank ranks third in the world in stock-market value. HSBC is continuing to invest in China, and the spokesman said the country remains "at the center of HSBC's emerging-markets strategy."

As foreign rivals lagged, profits of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the country's biggest lender, increased 16 percent in 2009, while China Construction Bank's profits rose 15 percent.

The drop in foreign bank profits was led by a decline in income on loans as the gap between lending and deposit rates narrowed, the paper said.

China's banks compensated for the drop with a huge increase in loan volume, while foreign banks lent more slowly due to pressure from their overseas headquarters, it said.

Bank performance in China is likely to recover somewhat this year as the impact of the global financial crisis recedes, the newspaper said.

Market watch

Gov gives green light to foreign banks for yuan retail

The central government will allow foreign institutions to open cross-border yuan settlement accounts at any locally registered banks, according to new rules issued by People's Bank of China.

Foreign banks have long complained that their bad performance in China is due to limitations imposed by local regulators. The central bank said yuan settlement will be the first step to further opening the market as promised when the country joined the World Trade Organization in 2001.

Pursuant to the existing regulations, foreign banks are required to set up corporate banks first before they are allowed to engage in yuan-denominated retail businesses.

The start of yuan trading settlement in Hong Kong will underpin the city's status as

an international financial center but will not affect its currency peg against the US dollar, Chief Executive Donald Tsang said.

Under the new regulations posted on the central bank's website, all foreign firms are allowed to open a yuan-settlement account. Previously only those with locally registered operations were qualified.

Foreign institutions can choose any locally registered bank, either domestic or the local unit of a foreign bank, to set up a yuan-settlement account, according to the statement.

The new rule, which took effect October 1, restricts foreign firms on how the funds in these accounts can be used. The yuan funds in these accounts cannot be converted into foreign currencies or withdrawn as cash, it said.

Expecting growth in 2010

A recent survey echoes the *Journal's* forecast on foreign banks' performance this year.

The survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) said foreign banks would see future opportunities in the Chinese financial services market, but that as a whole their market share did not increase last year.

After speaking to 42 foreign financial institutions in China, PwC found growth prospects had improved for many foreign banks.

Five banks anticipated growth above 100 percent, 12 banks predicted growth between 20 percent and 40 percent year on year while 16 banks forecasted 10 to 20 percent growth.

Only three banks predicted flat growth of 0 to 3 percent, according to the PwC survey.

Over 30 foreign banks were now likely to incorporate and more banks were likely to take that option this year, said PwC.

Increasing competition from domestic banks, however, was identified by foreign banks as the most difficult aspect of running a bank in China.

(Agencies)

Speculators gambling with oolong tea

By Zhao Hongyi

Dahongpao, one of the top grades of oolong tea from Fujian Province, is selling for 200,000 yuan per kilogram in Xiamen.

On Xiamen's tea street, the nexus of the Fujian tea trade, 500 stores are selling Dahongpao tea. There were only a couple dozen dealers last year.

Even the cheapest grades of Dahongpao fetch 3,000 yuan per kilogram, a threefold increase over the last year, said Wu Shuchang, an officer with the Xiamen Tea Association.

In Beijing, the price of Dahongpao has already climbed 30 percent at Maliandao Tea Street. "The price gouging of Xiamen won't be reflected in the Beijing market until next spring," said Wang Jiangchao, deputy secretary of the Chamber of Fujian Teas in Beijing.

One sales girl said that is because Dahongpao is targeted to high-end customers. "Our Dahongpao is limited, so only certain VIPs can purchase it," she said.

Market observers said a sudden burst of capital in the tea market is driving the change.

Many of China's nouveau riche are looking to invest in unexplored channels. After tapping out the coal industry in Shanxi Province, the oil industry in Xinjiang Autonomous Region and the housing market everywhere, they are starting to manipulate the agricultural market.

"The central government has been passing new regulations to lock them out of the coal mining, oil and property markets which they've already mangled," Wang Shoutao, a market observer from the Beijing University of Commerce, said. "This year, they switched to gambling on garlic, ginger and mung beans."

Over the summer, the cost of garlic and ginger in Beijing rose to 16 yuan per kilogram. Mung beans sold for 26 yuan per kilogram. Many Beijingers complained that the expense prohibits even basic home cooking.

The Xiamen Tea Association has another explanation for the price spike.

Its spokesmen said the Wuyi Mountain area, a major Dahongpao producer in Fujian, was hit by rains and floods. A poor harvest has put a squeeze on this year's supply.

"It's natural that when the supply falters the price climbs," one female tea vendor said.

Wang said the price of Dahongpao in Beijing will probably not climb as high as the price in Xiamen, as the tea is not popular with many locals. "Dahongpao enjoys a high reputation in Beijing, but fewer than 10 percent of the people choose to drink it," he said.

Speculators would not store tea in Beijing and expect its prices to increase, he said.

The average price of Dahongpao in Beijing is between 1,200 and 6,000 yuan per kilogram.

"If the price is lower, it would be hard to guarantee the quality," Wang said. Higher prices should be equally suspect, he said.

(By Huang Daohen)

Remuneration for returning lost possessions?

By Zhao Hongyi

A new company in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, is provoking hot discussion about the value of helping others. Is it moral to create a business centered around returning people's lost possessions?

The company collects items that people have lost – usually found by street cleaners – puts them in a database and lists the price for collecting the items.

For instance, the company charges 20 yuan for small items like bus cards and debit cards, 100 yuan for business operational certificates, driving licenses and license plates and 40 percent of the face value for coupons and telephone cards.

The company's website has received lots of traffic since opening in July. Similar companies have started in Yangzhou and Xuzhou in the same province.

The success of the business has triggered strong discussions. In traditional Chinese philosophy, it is immoral to charge for small favors such as returning a lost possession. In the 1960s, Lei Feng – the model worker held up as a paragon of morality and righteousness – helped others throughout his life, often anonymously.

Back then, people were taught to hand over possessions and items they found to the police and to help elders and the disabled. But today, these behaviors are connected with money in one way or another.

"The market economy is changing the fundamental principles and values of our daily lives," Yu Zhongxu, a retired worker, said.

"We used to have a closet at public venues like railway stations, department stores and cinemas displaying the items people lost," Yu recalled. "People who recognized the items they lost could take them back."



Many cities have a lost property department, but a Nanjing company has become the first to launch a pay-to-return model.

IC Photo

Comment

The business is positive

The business doesn't challenge the morals we hold. Instead, it gives a practical incentive for helping others. It will encourage more people to return the things they pick up and help us establish principles for continuing to do so in the future.

– Jia Zhiruo, commentator, Huaxi Metropolis Daily

Reality to be blamed, not the business

The business does not prevent you from helping others for free. If you really are a follower of Lei Feng, you can decline to receive the payment or donate it to charity. The reality of the situation is that morality has been corroded: when you return a lost item, you could be suspected of being the thief. The business isn't to be blamed; it's reality.

– Yang Jinwen, technical engineer, EDF Beijing Office

Slippery slope

This is a challenge to our traditional moral principles. Where are the police? We used to give them the things we picked up so that owners could get them back. I don't know whether these companies will become a place for thieves to cash in on the items they steal. Let's see.

– Wang Jie, teacher, Hunan

It's a supplement to tradition

Handing a reward for returning lost possessions is a common practice in Western countries. We should keep an open mind and accept this new business.

– Xue Ping, assistant professor of social development, Yangzhou University

Business needed, but could be free

Because this business is warmly received on the market, it shows our society needs platforms like these. It's our government's responsibility to set up these platforms, but do it free of charge. Or we can donate the fees to charities.

– Gao Junbo, officer, Hubei

Elders force young people to offer seats on buses

By Zhang Dongya

In recent months, the media has reported several incidents of elderly bus passengers forcing young people to give up their seats. One particular case caught everyone's attention.

The *Chengdu Business Daily* reported that on September 16 on Bus 49 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, a 63-year-old man asked a

young woman to offer up her seat. The woman did not respond, so the man sat on her lap.

A witness, Hua Biaomu, said the young woman got very irritated by the man. When the woman cried out and scolded him as an "old freak," he struck her in the face.

The man finally stood up when other passengers began to criticize him.

Earlier, a similar thing happened in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province. Disputes over the offering of seats have been happening for a long time. In 2008, Beijing set the 22nd day of each month as "Offer Your Seat Day" to encourage citizens to offer their seats for those who need them, such as expectant mothers, the elderly and the disabled.



A bus conductor puts up a sign asking passengers to be respectful of others.

CFP Photo

Comment

Attitude change required

Fighting for a seat on the bus or subway is also common in Singapore. I recently heard of a pregnant woman complaining to the newspapers and TV stations about people who have refused to offer their seat to her.

I think the old man should not have used those adversarial

tactics because they are counterproductive. People in need of a seat can politely ask for one, and most people will say yes.

There's no doubt that people should help others in need. But some who claim to be "special" and demand others' help will not be looked upon favorably. They should change their attitudes and show some apprecia-

tion when others do them a favor such as offering their seat.

– Charles Chan, Singaporean working in Beijing

Announce when pregnant women board

Pregnant women should be given priority on buses because they are the most at risk in crowded spaces. When they come on a bus, the conductor

should make an announcement and ask for passengers to give up their seats.

– Cui Xiaowen, magazine editor

Elders should also consider the young

Offering seats should not be compulsory. Also, elders should be considerate as well, as young people are often under lots of

pressure from work and usually have long commutes to their offices.

Some old people like to go to the morning market by bus, but that's during rush hour for people who need to work. We can perhaps choose another time to take the bus.

– Tao Xiangyu, 65, Beijing citizen

American writer improvises in a black space

By Liang Meilan

Last Wednesday afternoon, prolific American writer Roy Kesey composed a short story within the confinements of time and space as part of Get It Louder, a traveling exhibition of design, art and literature in Sanlitun SOHO.

The process took 40 minutes, with the writer working in a closed, completely dark room. Whatever the author wrote appeared simultaneously on a screen outside.

Get It Louder has already organized several sessions of such spot writing with local writers, but it was a little different with Kesey. A translator sat outside and was asked to be an active part of the fictional conversation, not merely to translate the lines into Chinese.

During the composition of a story titled "Translator's Note: a Dialogue," Kesey purposely wrote lines that would get the translator involved, such as "insert translator's name" – to which Matt, the translator, would oblige.

"He actually had a choice between inserting his own name and translating the instruction literally," Kesey said. "This was a moment of performance art, which was him trying to make a decision."

This was the first time Kesey has participated in such an exercise.

"I'd like to see this as a metaphor for our thinking that we are living in a private space when we are actually not," he said. "And of course I'm aware of the people outside."

On September 26, Kesey



Roy Kesey in a flooded military tunnel complex beneath Beijing.
Photo provided by Roy Kesey

attended a Get It Louder forum called "Other Countries, Other Cultures," where writers talked about writing stories about China.

Born and raised in California, the 42-year-old currently lives with his Peruvian wife and two children in Peru. He lived in Beijing from 2003 to 2008, during which time he wrote a lot of stories about China.

He recalled his first writing projects in China were mainly dispatches on the country's cultural and contemporary phenomenon for an American magazine. Self-described as a slow writer, he did not start his first short story until nine months in.

Once, he wrote a story inspired by a 15-meter-long traditional Chinese scroll painting about the Three Gorges by Li Yushan. In Kesey's story, a 15-kilometer scroll about a mountain in northeast America is painted in 34 years. The story was about artistic compromise, Kesey

said, because while the man paints, he still "has to eat, so he has to think about how to sell the scroll for something he can live off."

Kesey also recalled a piece he wrote about some young girls building "salad towers." This story was inspired by a trip to a Chinese pizza hut, where Kesey saw a salad plate shared by six people.

"In the US, you would never see this happen. So I just wanted to write about this and bring this image back to American readers for them to see how the same Pizza Hut salad bar is different [in the US and China]," Kesey said.

In the story, a beautiful tower is built and quickly destroyed in the name of consumption.

In 2007, Kesey published a non-fiction book called *Nanjing: A Cultural and Historical Guide*, which he calls a historical guidebook. "It is useful for people who want to know more about the city. What is interesting about the book is that there are some secondary tourist sites but not major sites that many people might like to know," he said.

A review of the book says it "provides an insightful look at the complex history of this former capital and will help visitors to gain a comprehensive understanding of the geographic and political factors that have shaped the city. It is the perfect travel companion for a visitor who seeks to uncover the intricacies of Nanjing's history. With its glossy illustrations it also makes a great read for the armchair traveler."



Warren Buffett (left) and Bill Gates share their China experience at a press conference in Beijing.
CFP Photo

Charity work in China still young, Gates, Buffet say

US billionaires Bill Gates and Warren Buffett said small-scale philanthropy is "more admirable" than its large-scale form during their China trip last week.

"I particularly admire people who are engaged in small-scale philanthropy," investment baron Buffett said at a press conference.

Buffett and Gates, who have already persuaded 40 wealthy US individuals to hand over more than half of their fortunes, spoke out a closed-door charity banquet with China's wealthy last Wednesday night. Some media considered the meeting a touchstone to test the philanthropist attitudes of Chinese billionaires.

But the two men published an open letter saying they did not want to push wealthy Chinese to give away their wealth, but only wanted to listen to their views on philanthropy.

They said the Chinese super-rich have "no reluctance" to talk about philanthropy.

"About 25 to 30 people among the guests talked about philanthropy. We talked about our own experiences in the US," Buffett said.

Gates noted that most of China's billionaires were the first generation in their family to accumulate wealth. They were not very familiar with charity work, which is still at an early stage in China.

"Now, rich people in China are thinking about their children and society, how to arrange and organize their fortunes, and how to spend it. That is a timely question," he said.

Buffett was also aware that wealthy Chinese are worried their motives for donating to charity may be misunderstood.

He also said they have privacy concerns – will their names appear in newspapers? How will the public react?

"Do I really want my name in the paper and everybody talking about it? We hear that in both countries. We encourage

age people in the US to come forward. We tell them that [the public] is probably going to know about it anyway, and the example that people set does affect how their children behave later on, it affects how their community behaves," Buffett said.

Both Gates and Buffett believed exchanges among philanthropists were important in China to promote charity.

Rupert Hoogewerf, who studies China's wealthy and compiles the Shanghai-based Hurun Rich List, told Xinhua that charity organizations in China need to be more transparent and that charities in China need more government support, like tax incentives.

The Hurun Report Inc. issued the Hurun Rich List 2010 – China's equivalent to the Forbes list. At the top of the list was Zong Qinghou, the founder of the Hangzhou Wahaha Group. With a personal fortune of \$12 billion (82 billion yuan), Zong is the richest man on the Chinese mainland.

"The spring of China's charity cause has arrived. It is not yet summer," Hoogewerf said.

He explained that although some wealthy Chinese have made considerable individual charitable donations, none has established mature charity projects.

"Only after charity funds are well distributed will the summer of Chinese charity arrive," he said.

Hoogewerf said rich families can shoulder more social responsibility through charity work, which can also help reduce anger over the widening gap between the rich and poor.

Now that Gates and Buffett have passed the China test, they said their next stop may be India, where the number of dollar-millionaires grew by 50 percent last year, according to one new wealth report.

Forbes' top 100 Indians are almost as rich as the top 400 Chinese.
(Agencies)

Beijing in foreigners' eyes – and lenses



By Li Zhixin

A photo contest involving 10 photographers from the US, Germany, France and Japan was launched on September 27. Over 14 days, they documented the city's new developments. Beijing's Municipal Government Information Office will eventually select 80 of their pictures to be part of an exhibition in Canada, Italy and Japan later this year.

Photo by Li Zhixin



Anniken Huitfeldt
Photo by Tone Helene Aarvik

Minister of culture explores Sino-Norwegian exchange

By Chu Meng

By invitation from the Chinese Ministry of Culture, Norwegian Minister of Culture Anniken Huitfeldt made a four-day tour of Shanghai and Beijing starting September 27 in an aim to explore potential cultural exchange opportunities between young Chinese and Norwegian artists.

"Norway is such a small country that young Norwegian artists need a much broader field to explore. So I came to China," Huitfeldt said. She said that she successfully persuaded her government to give an extra percentage point of money out of the state budget for international cul-

tural exchange activities.

China is Huitfeldt's first of several trips. She did not come empty-handed.

On October 4, a monthlong festival began involving theater performances of 19th-century Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's works in Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou. An Ibsen-inspired art exhibition accompanies the performances.

The highlight is a new interpretation of Ibsen's classic play, *A Doll's House*, directed and choreographed by Un-Magritt Nordseth and featuring a mixed Norwegian-Chinese cast.

"Jin Xing will play the role of Nora," Huitfeldt said. Jin is known as a national treasure

and is one of China's most prolific dancers. She is also the first person in China to have undergone a sex change surgery.

"The organizers see this as adding a new dimension to the character of Nora, raising issues relevant to our time, including sexual identity and relationships," Huitfeldt said.

Last month, Lin Zhaohua produced Ibsen's play, *The Master Builder*, at the Norwegian National Theater.

The festival will mark the introduction of internationally renowned playwright and winner of the 2010 Ibsen International award, Jon Fosse, to the Chinese theater audience.

Ibsen International was

established this year to develop new arenas for Norwegian arts and culture around the world. The organization seeks to establish collaborations with international institutions and to implement projects using the original works of Ibsen as a starting point.

During the minister's tour, she also met with the officials from General Administration of Press and Publication, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television and Xinhua News Agency. She attended the opening of the seminar "The Architecture of Tourism: Authenticity, Heritage and Renewal" at the Norwegian pavilion at Shanghai Expo.

China increasingly popular as destination for US students

By Han Manman

More international students are choosing to study specialized subjects in China, such as economics, business and agriculture, which have been the top three majors of US students in China in the last two years.

In the past, Chinese language and culture were students' primary choices. This change reflects an increase in students' deepened curiosity about all aspects of China.

Around 20,000 students from the US are currently studying in China, said You Shaohong, minister counselor of the education office in the Chinese embassy in the US. More and more US students are receiving their Bachelor's, Master's and

doctorate degrees in China as well, You said.

You said he has witnessed a rapid increase of US students going to China, especially in the last five years.

China's booming economic development contributed to an increase of about 4,000 US students here five years ago, but the overall number of students was still low.

Today, the country is the second most popular country in Asia for US students to study, behind South Korea.

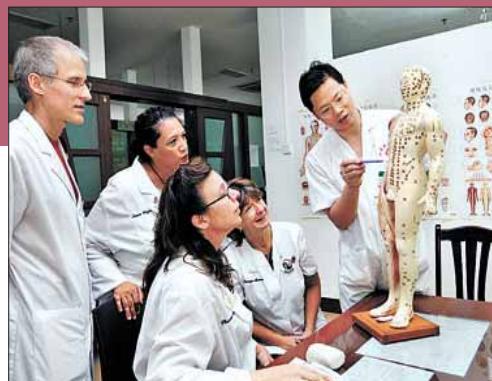
The number will only increase, You said. According to the US embassy in Beijing, around 100,000 American students will go to China over the next four years under an offi-

cial student-exchange program between the two countries.

The number of international students in China has also risen dramatically, hitting a record high last year of 240,000, according to recently released statistics from the Ministry of Education.

These students are from 190 countries and regions around the world. Sixty years ago, China had fewer than 20 international students, and they were all from three countries in Eastern Europe, said Zhang Xiuqin, director-general of the ministry's department of international cooperation and exchange.

Figures from the ministry show that the most popular universities in China for foreign



Traditional Chinese medicine is one of the most popular topics of study for international students in China.

CFP Photo

students are the Beijing Language and Culture University, Peking University, Fudan University, Tsinghua University and the University of International Business and Economics.

Beijing, Shanghai and Tian-

jin attract the largest number of foreign students, according to the ministry.

It said South Korea, US and Japan were the three countries that sent the most students to China this year.

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Get your talk on at the Beijing Debate Society

By Liang Meilan

Hanging out with friends or having boozy parties is a common way for many young people to spend their after-work hours. But a small group of people has chosen a more somber though no less fun activity: debate.

The Beijing Debate Society, created in March, has been hosting regular Thursday night debates at Runqiyuan Tea House on Andingmen Dong Dajie. The group has 50 people, four-fifths of whom are foreigners, mostly in their late-20s.

The group uses the popular 40-minute British parliamentary-style format seen in many international debating championships. Eight people debate in four teams, and teams go head-to-head. One side is in favor of a pre-chosen topic, and the other is resolved against it.

"Within the same side, for or against, you have one team that will win and one team that will lose," said Charles Dirrig, co-founder of the society. It's that competition that makes the debates interesting and challenging.

Dirrig, a 25-year-old American at Capgemini Consulting Company is a debating enthusiast who participated in many debates when he was a college student in Paris. "I have some friends who have the same interest as me and we noticed there's no debating going on among expats on the east side of town," he said. "So we set out to organize debates half a year ago for like-minded people to join."

Dirrig finds the debates help people become more rational in communicating, especially over controversial topics.

"It helps people to be structured in what they say," he said. "People can learn through the debating process to separate different ideas supporting the main point. When the ideas are separated and illustrated and explained clearly, you can then debate on the separated ideas."

"So you cannot say you don't agree with an opinion by merely saying that it is wrong. But you can say you disagree because the illustration of one of the ideas supporting the opinion is flawed."

The topics are mostly non-political and non-religious. The group



Debaters take notes while the opposition presents its arguments.

Photo provided by Charles Dirrig

also steers clear of lightning rod subjects such as global warming. "For these topics, people already have a lot of information and they may make shortcuts in the argument they present, so it won't produce a good debate," Dirrig said, explaining that the ideal topic should be free and open, such as whether the value of speeding tickets should be proportional to a person's income.

"That's one topic that makes sense but nobody has thought to ask the question," Dirrig said. "So the debaters have to underline the principles that would make this a just and right law."

To the members, the club functions as a great networking opportunity. For Chinese members, it's a great chance to improve their oral English.

"Since the topic is given 15

minutes in advance, you don't need to do preparation by reading piles of materials," said Kurt Sun, one of the Chinese debaters. "It's actually a form of game for helping me think clearly, gesture properly and express myself eloquently in English."

The foreign and Chinese debaters are placed at the same podium when debating. "We insist heavily on the fact that it's not the beauty or the eloquence or the accent that's judged. It is the clarity of the ideas," Dirrig said. "For Chinese people, even if their English isn't native or very good, they can still have good ideas."

"Though we are a non-professional organization, we still aim to make it a serious one," Dirrig said. "We conduct every debate strictly in accordance to the principles of the format. And we have

coaches who have participated in debating championships and know well about the principles and judging."

The society is planning to organize matches between local teams from colleges like Peking University and Tsinghua University before Christmas.

"In the future, we're thinking about organizing a proper debate tournament where we have teams from Europe and the US," Dirrig said. "I think it might be interesting to have many debate associations outside China come and have such an event."

Beijing Debate Society

Venue: Runqiyuan Tea House, 65 Andingmen Dongdajie, Dongcheng District

When: Every Thursday, 8-10 pm
Tel: 15901297104
Cost: Free

Event

Beijing cultural day excursion

JUMP! Foundation is organizing a daylong excursion throughout town. Attendees will visit the artistic, cultural and historic parts of Beijing from a new perspective. The excursion includes a walk through history in Houhai, then Olympic Park and Forest Park. A trip to the 798 Art District will conclude the trip.

Where: JUMP! Foundation, 603 Silver Tower, 2 Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District

When: Every Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 9 am - 4 pm

Tel: 8440 2662

Cost: 450 yuan

Flamenco workshop during National Holiday

Flamenco training institute Casa del Flamenco will start a four-day workshop for dance aficionados who don't plan to travel outside Beijing this holiday. The course will be an intensive study of the choreography of Sevillanas and Guajiras, with no basic technical footwork training.

Where: Qijiyuan Diplomatic Residence Compound, 9 Jianwai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: October 2-5, 2-6 pm
Tel: 13910914251
Cost: 880 yuan

Dog obedience course

Dennis Schenck, a certified canine behavior consultant and dog trainer, will teach basic dog obedience and puppy foundation courses. Dogs will learn the basics: sit, stay, lay down, come and walk on a loose leash. Owners will learn how to shape desirable behaviors while eliminating unwanted ones by using humane and effective positive and negative reinforcement techniques.

Where: Green T. House Living restaurant, 318 Cui-gezhuang Xiang Hegezhuang Cun, Chaoyang District

When: Ends October 30, every Saturday, 10-11 am
Tel: 13718027490
Cost: 600-900 yuan per class

SambAsia carnival

SambAsia Beijing, the only active ensemble in China dedicated to the drumming traditions of Brazil, is offering an open performance in collaboration with the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), available to anyone interested in Brazilian dancing and drumming.

Where: UCCA Cafe, 4, Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: October 2, 3-4:30 pm
Tel: 8459 9387
Cost: 30 yuan for advanced ticket, 40 yuan at door

(By Liang Meilan)

Sailing running for a good cause

By Wang Yu

The Beijing Sailing Center (BSC), partnered with local charity shop Roundabout, is organizing a Great Wall Sailing Charity Challenge from October 15-17 to raise money for charity.

The challenge includes sailing 40 kilometers from the BSC base near Beidaihe in Qinhuangdao, Hebei Province to Laolongtou - "Old Dragon's Head" - where the Great Wall meets the Bohai Sea. Competitors will then run 12 kilometers along the path of the Great Wall ruins through the scenic fort of Shanhaiguan and onward to the

grand finish on top of the Great Wall at Jiaoshan.

The entry fee of 1,000 yuan per competitor goes directly to Roundabout for its charity projects and partners. Based in Shunyi District, Roundabout began as a small unwanted-goods drop-off point and morphed into a much-needed supply distribution center for 30 charities in and around Beijing.

Leslie Simpson, founder of the shop, arrived in China in 2004 and immediately volunteered to work at a foster care home for children with various disabilities. She found the generosity of

the Beijing community staggering and the idea of Roundabout as a centralized distribution center was born.

Among its many projects, Roundabout has been involved since January in raising funds for a village in Hebei that cares for children with cystic fibrosis. It is this particular cause that the BSC Great Wall Sailing Charity Challenge aims to benefit.

The event calendar calls for competitors to arrive by train at BSC in Qinhuangdao. The afternoon they will learn how to handle their boats under the supervision of BSC's team of qual-

ified instructors.

The challenge begins the next day at 9 am, with competitors sailing in teams of four. After the last person has completed the final run, BSC will host a party for all competitors at its base.

For those who don't want to participate, the organizer is also offering a spectator package that includes transportation from Beijing, meals and the party. Spectators can also try sailing at BSC on the third day.

Interested parties should visit beijingsailing.com or call 5900 0267 for more details.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiying@ynet.com

As the traffic in town is getting worse, I plan to buy a motorcycle for commuting. But I don't know if I have to apply for a license for that. I already have a license back in the US. Do I need to take a training course and pass an examination before I can ride a motorcycle in Beijing?

You do need a license to ride a motorcycle here. Since you have a US license that has not expired, you only need to take a small exam on traffic regulations in China before getting a Chinese license issued by the Vehicle Administration Office. You have to present your passport, temporary residence permit, your original US license, a Chinese translation of the US driver's license and a physical exam form. The fee is 50 yuan. You can choose to take the exam in either English or Chinese. Call the Vehicle Administration Office at 8763 5150 for more information.

I am thinking about buying health insurance in China because I plan to stay here for a long time. I want to get health insurance that isn't too expensive but will still cover me if I go traveling. I have my own business and I can cover it myself. Please give me some recommendations.

You can try GlobalHealth Asia. It has a team of insurance professionals with more than 25 years of experience in international and health-care management. It has operations in China and provides local support for individuals, families and corporations in their insurance and medical coverage plans. A plan called Global SH 400 Plan might fit your needs. It features full hospitalization and outpatient coverage with an annual limit of up to \$2 million (14 million yuan), plus the option to add a maternity benefit and dental plan. Visit globalhealthasia.com for more information.

The cold weather is coming and I need a hat and some mittens; what is a good store that sells knitting supplies?

Beyondknitting.com may help you there. The website was created in 2009 with a commitment to offering high-quality yarns, tools and patterns to help customers create beautiful and long-lasting garments. The goods usually arrive in 10 to 12 days.

(By Liang Meilan)

Road trip to Tibet

By Zhao Hongyi

For city dwellers, Tibet is the ultimate road trip in the autumn months, but many have no idea how to get there. *Beijing Today* asked some drivers about their experiences.

"You need to find a professional transportation company to consign your car, by road or rail, to various checkpoints, as it's too far from coastal cities to western China," said Yang Hong, a car enthusiast and a TV/radio talk show host now.

The price and pickup procedure of the car varies depending on the checkpoint. Railway transportation is more expensive but more reliable than road transportation.

Yang said it's important to pack extra motor oil, which is hard to find in remote cities out west. If possible, take extra fuel as well. Components and spare parts, like oil filters, air filters and shock absorbers are necessary because the roads are muddy and mountainous, and it's hard to find competent vehicle repair shops.

Spare tires – at least two or three – are a must. There's no hope of getting emergency service on your car once you hit the more desolate stretches. Prepare to be able to do everything yourself. Even if you find a service provider, it may take days to get your bill processed, Yang said.



At the Himalayan base

CFP Photo

Follow your own schedule. "[Locals there] have no concept of time. If you find accommodations, it's better to tell the guide or hostel owner exactly how many nights you will stay," Yang said. "If you say two or three nights, they will think it's two or three weeks. If your vehicle is in trouble, that's a great chance for them to get your money."

Also, avoid unnecessary detours. The lakes, for instance – "tschuo" in Tibetan language – are beautiful, but they are full of silt and not fit for swimming.

And finally, prepare enough food, water and especially clothes. You'll be ascending higher and higher, so it'll get colder and colder.

The plateau is now connected with the rest of China, including

Xinjiang, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, by a number of roads, though most of them are hard to drive. There are forests, valleys, deserts and sometimes abominable weather. But then again, there's adventure in that, Yang said, and that's the reason for taking a road trip to begin with.

Recommended freight companies

Beijing Gundag Freight Co.

It provides vehicle transportation to nearly all destinations throughout China, both by road and rail.

Where: Kanghua Road, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8241 1106, 13552998771, 13910299857

Beijing Ping'an Logistic Express Co.

It mainly provides road transportation of vehicles.

Where: Logistic Compound, Shangdi East Road, Haidian District
Tel: 4006889318, 13699118950

Beijing Bifabida Logistic Co.

It provides door service of road transportation of vehicles.

Where: Shenglong Logistic Park, Xinfadi, Fengtai District

Tel: 5118 1204, 13520705692

Beijing Railway Express Co.

It provides railway transportation of vehicles to destinations throughout China and abroad.

Where: Beijing Railway Station, Chongwen District
Tel: 5118 1014, 5118 1224, 1369557065

Visit Beijing Zoo and get your passport stamped



Photo by Ye Mingxia

In a nod to the Shanghai Expo, Beijing Zoo is offering "passports" much like the ones at the Expo, which visitors take around to various pavilions to get stamped.

The Beijing Zoo passport makes it easy for visitors to

track where they've been and where they'd like to go next. It can be picked up from a post office located at the zoo's south gate, and there are people with stamps at each of the zoo's 31 sections.

At the post office, visitors can

also make their own postcards with themselves edited into a picture alongside an animal of their choosing.

The post office also contains information about animals and their culture. It is open every day from 9 am to 4:30 pm.

Beijing Zoo

Where: 137 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
Tel: 6831 5131, 6839 0274

(By Zhao Hongyi)

By He Jianwei

Peking Opera is on this year's list of candidates for Intangible Cultural Heritage protection.

But regardless of whether it makes UNESCO's list this November, the city's artists and troupes are already discussing how to carry the ailing traditional form forward.

Last year, Beijing Peking Opera Theater began its collaborating with PoloArts Entertainment Company to restore an old theater and designing a permanent program for it.

On October 12, the world will see whether they manage to return to Peking Opera's roots.

The wooden temple in a hutong south of Hepingmen looks comparatively new. Its freshly carved beams still bear the smell of cinnabar paint.

But the Temple Theater hasn't had anything to do with Buddhism for centuries.

The theater, also known as Zheng Yi Ci, has been a Peking Opera stage since 1688, when it was converted during the reign of the Kangxi Emperor (1661-1722).

Today it is famous for being the country's only fully-preserved wooden opera theater.

"We spent a year restoring this temple in the hopes it can be the new destination for Peking Opera performances," Wang Xiang, CEO of PoloArts Entertainment Company, said September 25 at the theater's unveiling.

The temple's reopening is highly symbolic for Chinese theater followers. Its long history stretches back almost to the dawn of Peking Opera. Throughout the golden age, recession and revival of the art, its old beams have played host to countless giants of the stage.

Like so many of Beijing's old buildings, the temple was seriously damaged during the Cultural Revolution. In 1995, businessman Wang Yuning found the temple in a sad state of disrepair and sponsored its full restoration.

Business performances were irregular, and the temple closed in 2005.

PoloArts has promoted local Chinese opera for many years. In 2007, its CEO invited director Wang Shiyu to stage the Imperial Granary's production of Kunqu Opera. Its actors have been performing every night since to great success in both business and cultural promotion.

When the government announced its intent to submit Peking Opera as a candidate for 2010 World Intangible Cultural Heritage last year, Wang decided to get involved again.

UNESCO previously named Kunqu Opera, China's oldest and most influential form, as a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2001. Last year, Yueju Opera and Cantonese Opera were also included in the list.

Wang said he hopes to see Peking Opera acknowledged around the world as an influential form of theatrical opera. "But its inclusion should not mean the art form should be consigned to museums as something old-fashioned. Peking Opera has to survive as it always has – in a commercial form," he said.

But that may be difficult for many troupes.

After investigating the current market, Wang selected the Temple Theater as a venue and met with Beijing Peking Opera Theater to discuss reviving Mei Lanfang's classics.

"Mei Lanfang had a close relationship with the Temple Theater, and the current Mei Lanfang Peking Opera Troupe is affiliated with Beijing Peking Opera Theater," he said. Mei's grandfather Mei Qiaoling performed in the theater with the Sixi Troupe in 1881. Mei himself performed there in 1919. His son Mei Baoyu later performed on the same stage.

"Bringing Mei's classics back here is a significant move. Mei Lanfang was the first actor that performed Peking Opera in the West. He was not only the founder of the Performing Arts of Mei School, but was also one of the founders of three major stage-performing systems together with Russian Constantin Stanislavski and German Bertolt Brecht," said Chi Jinheng, an 88-year-old actor in the theater.

The actor's classic include the still-beloved *Battle with Invaders*, *Drunken Princess*, *The Goddess of Luo River*, *Take Command of the Troops*, *Farewell My Concubine* and *Sylph Scattering Flowers*.

These six stories were selected by director Li Liuyi as a panorama of Mei's works. But in their original forms, each story lasted 50 minutes. Recognizing the shorter attention spans of modern theatergoers, Li created a new two-hour performance that contains the highlights from all six.

"I hope it will be a window through which people can understand Peking Opera and learn to love it," he said.

Li's current work often wavers between drama and folk opera. Many of his stories introduce postmodern theatrical concepts to the opera stage – but his dramas are still infused with the stage methods and aesthetic principles of traditional opera.

His last five years were spent working on a *Trilogy of War Heroines*: "Mu Guiying," "Hua Mulan" and "Liang Hongyu." In the *Trilogy*, Li brought modern theatrical concepts to the traditional stage.

In "Mu Guiying," he replaced the props of a table and two chairs with a big ivory bathtub and changed the armored attire of the warriors into loose-fitting white robes.

But when it is time to touch Mei's classics, Li adheres to the strictest standards for traditional opera. The sets, costumes, music and singing are as they always were.

"The purpose of performing the classics is to show modern audiences the roots of Peking Opera. In ancient times, the actors performed in small indoor theaters without microphones and the audience was closer to the stage," he said.

Li plans to use a screen to show original recordings of Mei Lanfang alongside the new performers.

"We are responsible for the current state of ancient opera because we failed to fully inherit the old tradition. We can only know how to develop it further by looking to the past," Li said.

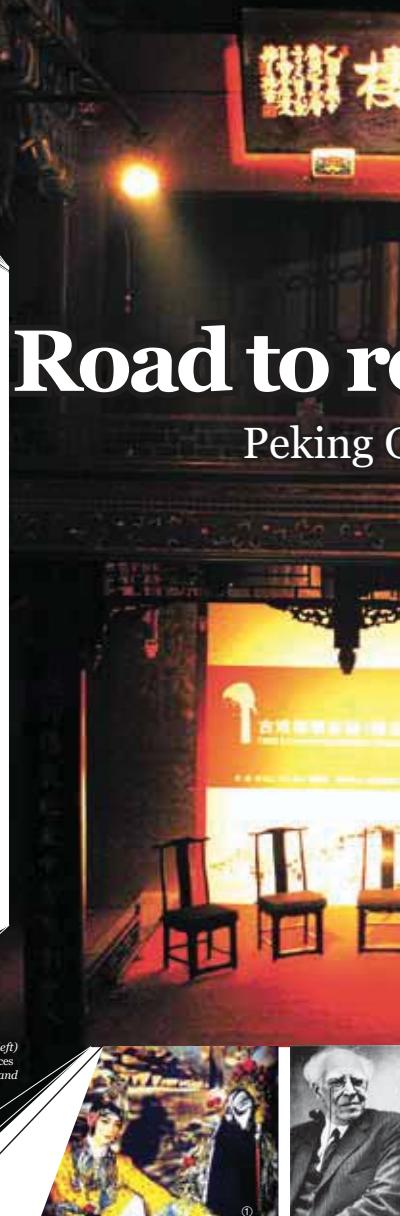
Mei's six-episode set will be a permanent program at the Temple Theater.

"This will be a milestone in promoting Mei's art. Every time my Western friends come to Beijing and ask me where they can see Mei's classics, I am ashamed to tell them we rarely perform them," said Li Hongtu, director of Mei Lanfang Peking Opera Troupe.

To support the new theater, the Beijing Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center is starting a new project to recruit talented young performers from local colleges and troupes, said Qian Rong, director of the center.

The government is investing 30 million yuan to complete the construction of a new Museum of Peking Opera by 2013.

①Mei Lanfang (left) acted in *Drunken Princess*
②Mei Lanfang (left) and Constantin Stanislavski



Road to re

Peking O

estoration

Opera reborn as it was



“Peking Opera has to survive as it always has – in a commercial form.”

— Wang Xiang, CEO of PoloArts Entertainment Company

“We are responsible for the current state of ancient opera because we failed to fully inherit the old tradition. We can only know how to develop it further by looking to the past.”

— Li Liuyi, director of Mei Lanfang Classics

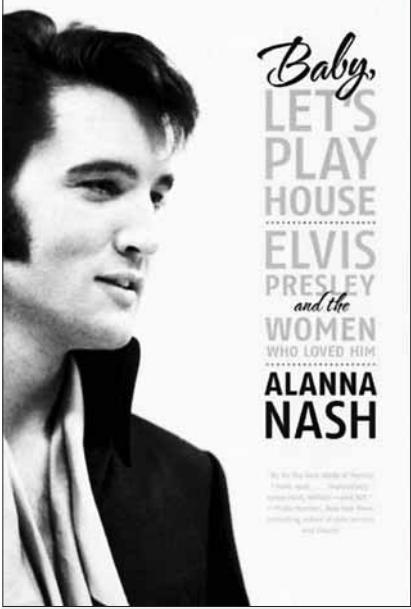
Mei Lanfang Classics A Temple Theater Production of Peking Opera

Where: Beijing Temple Theater (Zheng Yi Ci),
220 Xihewan Jie, Qianmen, Xicheng District
When: Daily starting October 12, 8 pm
Admission: 180 and 280 yuan for single tickets,
1,500 yuan for five-person box, 3,000 yuan for six-
person box, 18,000 yuan for 12-person box
Tel: 8315 1650

③Li Liuyi, director of Mei Lanfang Classics
④Chi Jinsheng, actor in Beijing Peking Opera
⑤The Temple Theater, also known as Zheng
Yi Ci, has been a Peking Opera stage
since 1688. Today it is famous for being
the country's only fully-preserved wooden
opera theater.

Photos provided by
PoloArts Entertainment Company

The king of rock 'n' roll and women



Baby, Let's Play House: Elvis Presley and the Women Who Loved Him
By Alanna Nash, 704pp, HarperCollins, \$27.99

By Charles Zhu

Alanna Nash, veteran music journalist and biographer of Dolly Parton and newswoman Jessica Savitch, turns her attention back to the king of rock 'n' roll in her latest book *Baby, Let's Play House: Elvis Presley and the Women Who Loved Him*.

In this arduously annotated book – one longer than the biographies of most American presidents – Nash examines Elvis Presley from every possible perspective.

The book began with a women-oriented article Nash wrote for *Ladies' Home Journal*, which she later decided to expand with her own research and secondhand gossip.

"I had already done three Elvis books," she said, "but I realized that there hadn't been a book that looked at him almost purely from the female perspective."

"Since he is probably the most important male sex symbol in history, the idea seemed viable – and also because he was such a woman-centered man," Nash said, citing the king's relationship with his mother.

Nash, also the biographer of Presley's famous Machiavellian manager Col. Tom Parker and his circle of cronies known as "the Memphis Mafia," interviewed 40 to 50 women who had contact of some sort with Presley during his life – classmates, relatives, girlfriends and actresses.

She explores his relationships with the actresses Ann-Margret, Cybill Shepherd, Raquel Welch, Mary Ann

Mobley, Barbara Eden and Yvonne Craig, and also examines Presley's ties to early love interests. She retells the stories of Presley's many girlfriends, each of whom believed herself to be his true love. Many still pined for Elvis some 50 years after their encounters in the 1960s and 1970s.

But most interesting of all was Presley's mother Gladys, who turned her life around almost the very day she gave birth to the future singer.

"From the moment Elvis was born, the mother and son demonstrated a remarkable closeness," Nash wrote.

Nash said Gladys could not nurture her surviving child toward independence, and the death of his twin brother left a crucial void in Elvis that no one would ever be able to fill. Elvis seemed to have been on a life-long search for true companionship, which he could never find.

After three deaths in his immediate family before Elvis was one year old, Gladys "clung to her son tighter than before, almost as if he were a shield against a treacherous and mercurial world, where disaster could strike at any second and take away all that mattered," Nash wrote.

Nash explores how that mother-son relationship finally brought doom to Elvis in his personal relationships and affected his working relationships and career choices. His extremely close relationship with his mother offered no chances for other adult women.

The book has rich illustrations of Presley with his girlfriends. The author

finds that many of the women Presley was attracted to physically resembled the brown-haired, soulful-eyed Gladys or his dead twin, and that many of them were 14 – including the only one he ever married, Priscilla Beaulieu – when they came into his life, because he thought the young girls were unthreatening.

"His tragedy is not simply that he died too soon, without breaking his dependence on prescription drugs and realizing the enormity [sic] of his talent in projects that fed his creative Muse," Nash writes in her epilogue, "but that he was forever trapped in a loop of dissatisfaction and suffering, stemming from the loss of his twin and the premature death of his mother, with whom he had been lethally enmeshed since childhood."

Nash borrowed the title of the book from *Baby, Let's Play House*, one of the most seductive songs Presley recorded in 1954.

His version differed slightly from the original: Elvis started the song with the chorus, where Arthur Gunter began with the first verse, and he replaced Gunter's line "You may get religion" with the words "You may have a pink Cadillac," referring to his custom-painted 1955 Cadillac that had been serving as the band's transportation at the time.

Nash tries her best to present all things mad, bad and sad in Elvis's life, but her laundry list of details seems to leave the emperor of music unclothed.

The destiny of an emperor

By Wang Yu

Things of Ming Dynasty took Chinese readers by storm two years ago, and since then the Sinosphere has seen a renaissance of the history novel. Debates may continue over how best to pull history into pop culture, but one thing is for sure: the genre has a steady reader base.

If his last novel about the infamous Qin Dynasty Prime Minister Li Si is any indication, Cao Sheng's *The Bloodthirsty Crown* is set to be the next bestseller.

The novel follows Liu Xiu, the first emperor of the Eastern Han Dynasty, from his childhood days to his campaign to reunite China. Unlike Li Si, who was known for political intrigue and totalitarianism, Liu is almost universally regarded by historians as a great king.

"I wrote about him because I found his destiny fascinating. Liu grew up knowing he would one day be king or emperor. He fulfilled his destiny, because destiny is something from which we can never escape," Cao says.

Much of Cao's success has to do with his storytelling style. His lightweight prose on weighty topics is peppered with contemporary lingo. The first half of this new book was completed after three years of research, and the entire text is based on historical records.

"The basic structure of the original version has changed several times. I think a history novel must respect the character and actual events," he said.

But the fact is that many history books present conflicting accounts of the same times. Cao compares the work of the historical fiction writer to the work of a good scholar.

"We learn from the records and bend them into a logically correct timeline," Cao said.

Liu rebuilt China as a complete country again and brought peace after an era of rebellion. As the first emperor of the dynasty he set an example for his grandchildren and left the people with new hope.

Such a man translates into a very flat character.



The Bloodthirsty Crown
By Cao Sheng, 297pp, Time Literature and Art Press, 29 yuan

"I had to write about a man of flesh and blood, not a benevolent god. That's where imagination comes in. But in historical fiction, even imagination must be rooted in fact," Cao said.

Liu, as the victor in some of China's most classic battles, would have been acutely aware of the pain war brings to a people. Cao looks for that aspect of the everyman in these now mythical figures.

Cao graduated from Zhejiang University with a degree in mechanical design at age 19. During his time as a designer, he started to post chapters of his story about Li Si to the history section of Tianya.com. Like many pop writers of the last decade, Cao's posts won the attention of publishers and he was able to launch a new career.

But readers forget authors who allow too much time to pass between two books. For most pop authors, a three-year break is equivalent to death. But Cao says the wait is worth it for a good book.

"I don't see myself as part of the literary community. I am a writer only when I have something to tell through my books," Cao says.

Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers.

Rabbit, Run

By John Updike, 272pp, Ballantine Books, \$16

The best time in Harry Angstrom's life was when he was a star basketball player in high school. Now in his mid-20s, his work is unfulfilling, his marriage is moribund and he tries to find happiness with another woman. But happiness is more elusive than a medal, and Harry must continue to run – from his wife, his life and from himself – until he reaches the end of the road and has to turn back.

The Lacuna

By Barbara Kingsolver, 544pp, Harper Perennial, \$16.99

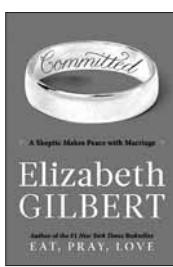
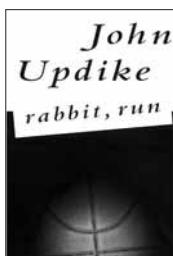
Harrison William Shepherd is the son of a US diplomat and Mexican mother. Shepherd spends his early years in Mexico in the 1930s making plaster for artist Diego Rivera and his wife Frida Kahlo. Leon Trotsky, who is hiding from Soviet assassins, lives in Rivera and Kahlo's house. After Trotsky is assassinated, Shepherd returns to the US and becomes an author of historical romances and is later investigated as a possible subversive by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Committed: A Skeptic Makes Peace with Marriage

By Elizabeth Gilbert, 285pp, Viking Adult, \$26.95

Gilbert's memoir is a testament of the power of marriage. She tackles her fears of marriage by delving into this topic, trying with all her might to discover through historical research, interviews and personal reflection about what this stubbornly enduring old institution actually is.

(By He Jianwei)



Tennis clubs rule the court

By Wang Yu

October is here, and that means it's tennis season for Beijing.

Windy days can screw up a serve, but the comfortable temperatures and bright sunshine more than make up for a couple of botched volleys. For tennis fans, an exhausting afternoon on the court is the best way to relax after a grueling week of work.

But during the National Day holiday, they have to take a break. Fans will put down their rackets to gather at the National Tennis Center to see who will be the next champion of China Open. During the past seven years, the event has played an important role in popularizing what was once a bourgeois pastime.



CFP Photo

Preparing for the event

Denis Liu, an architect, likes to unwind from his days of drafting by playing tennis with his friends at a local tennis club. This National Day holiday, Liu will get a break from his overtime to spend seven days at the China Open.

"Even though Raphael Nadal is absent this year, there are still top players like Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray competing. On the women's side, we have the Williams sisters and Maria Sharapova, whose games are usually worth watching," Liu says.

Liu and his friends already have their tickets, but how they will spend the rest of each day remains a mystery. A whole day at the venues can seem empty, especially when many good matches are not played on the central court. There are also interesting games at the National Tennis Center, where non-seeded players battle it out.

"If you have the patience to stick around the outside courts you might meet the stars by chance during their warm-up. It's a chance to ask for a signature or get a photo," Liu says.

Liu says he plans to take his equipment to the venue because it makes him feel like a part of the game – even though he can only play between matches. At any rate, the event is a chance to stock up on big-name equipment at a steep discount.

Born on the 'Net

Liu and his friends are members of a QQ-based tennis club started by a school teacher named Huang Yu two years ago. Every weekend, the members meet at a public court or local college. Each participant is ranked based on his or her skills and allowed to compete with members in the same bracket.

"Before this level system, members used to complain that they didn't like having to play against beginners or experienced players. Now we have 50 members and 20 who play every weekend. The experienced ones sometimes help out and coach the beginners," Huang says.

Huang has been playing since his junior year of college in Nanjing. After graduating, Huang moved to Beijing. The job was fine, but he couldn't find anyone to play tennis with until he started hanging out on a BBS for players. One of the members, a college student, helped reserve a court on campus court, and after that a community developed.

"When more people join in, there is more to think about. Organizing a weekend event is not that easy. You always have to have a backup court because the students sometimes have tennis lessons on the weekend," Huang says.

Money is another issue. Every participant has to chip in for the court time. But someone invariably skips out, and the organizer is left to cover that person's share with his own money. Huang's club is now charging beginners an initial membership fee of 50 yuan. Participants who skip five times after joining are blacklisted from participating.

"I don't want to have to turn this into a business, but it should be serious and members should have rules to obey. It makes sure that everyone has fun," Huang says.

Serving the masses

Beijing has many organizations similar to Huang's, and these online clubs have contributed to the rapid growth of the tennis community.

"People used to call tennis 'a game of the noble class' when I was a kid. But now you can see people playing everywhere and an available court on the weekend is harder to find. I think it is partly because of the tennis education programs in colleges. Most of us fell in love with the game as students," Liu says.

That it is played primarily by office workers makes tennis a social activity and a chance to extend office cooperation and competition through court rivalries.

"Usually there are some experienced players who majored in tennis at college who are essential to steering beginners in the right direction. But I do like the China Open, because it is bringing stars to China and that is getting people interested in the game," Huang says.



Gifts with patterns of traditional art

By Chu Meng

A previous *Beijing Today* feature story about the Guanfu Museum Gift Shop pointed out the shop's efforts to save ailing museums. Located in Lotus Lane, the cultural center of Houhai, Guanfu has helped save Ma Weidu's private museum with products that are unique to China's cultural identity.

Next to one of the world's most successful localized chain store brands – Starbucks – around Lotus Lane, visitors will find the 35-square-meter shop.

Owned by 38-year-old Shenyang-born Guo Yangyang, the products inside were mostly designed by Guo and inspired by Ma's Guanfu Classical Art Museum. With items priced between 20 and 300 yuan, visitors can take home pieces that resemble the artifacts they see in Ma's precious museum.

"Ma and I see the gift shop as a tool to give more people access to the core of the museum collections, whose skyscraper prices keeps most people at bay," Guo said. "Products in the shop are all designed as artistic derivatives of his collections."



Chinese "Hermes" silk scarves

Antique patterns can be found on the shop's silk scarves, which shimmer under modern lighting with a luxurious look similar to Hermes' signature product. "In each year's top fashion shows around the world, more and more international designers eye classic Chinese elements," Guo said. "However, most young Chinese fashion designers tend to ignore the beauty at their fingertips and in their backyard."

The silk scarves collection features products starting at 1,350 yuan.



Solar year eco bags

Another fashionable pick is environmentally-friendly red silk bags embroidered with names of the 24 days dividing the solar year on the traditional Chinese calendar. Red silk bags may not be practical to always carry around, though they can be exotic souvenirs for foreign tourists.

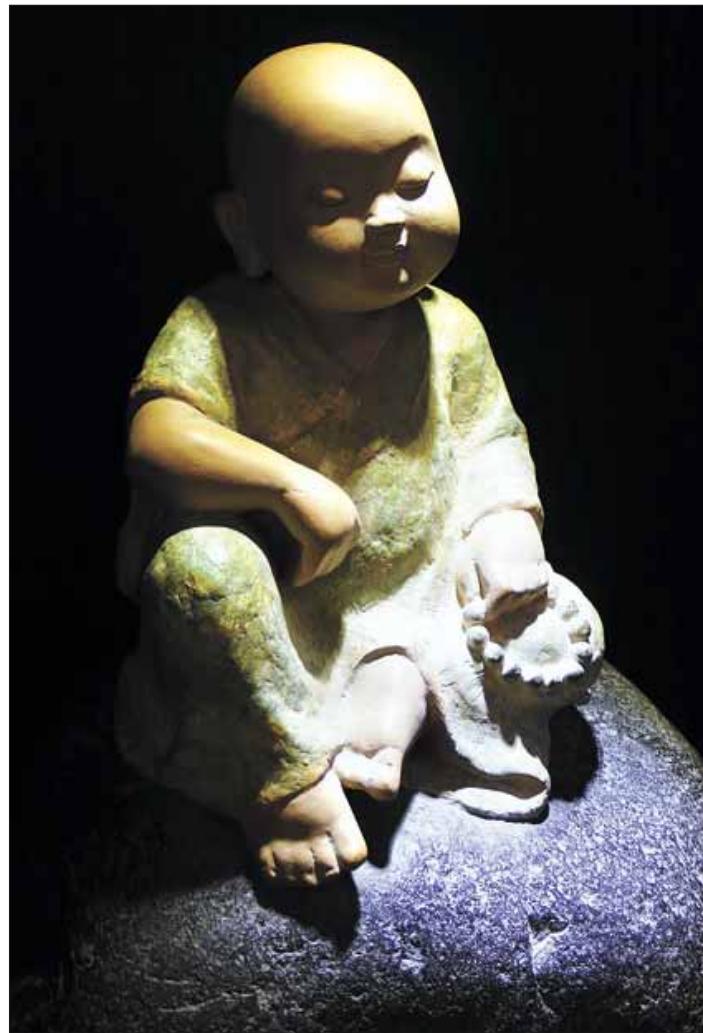
This solar-year collection also provides eco bags made of denim, which pairs well with autumn clothes and is much more durable. Cost is 139-149 yuan.



Antique waxed wrapping paper

One of the shop's signatures is its waxed wrapping paper, which bear signature patterns of red Chinese lions on a blue background inspired by a Song Dynasty ceramic bowl Ma collected in the 1990s. The waxed wrapping paper is made of recycled paper and was the foremost wrapping material for meats, dim sum and candies in China before the 1990s.

This type of paper has been popular for centuries because wax is water- and oil-proof. These days, it's great for wrapping gifts. A package of 12 pieces sells for 189 yuan.



Child-like Buddha

Sculptures of child-like Buddhas sell from 1,780 to 4,580 yuan. These are designed for fans of Chinese antiques who aren't as rich as Ma. These sculptures have childlike facial expressions and are inspired by traditional Chinese Buddhist concepts such as "seek innocent pleasure," "be unselfish," "have no cravings." They are made of *tiewanshi*, a kind of dark gray stone with a solid but silk-like texture after polishing, produced only in Taiwan Province.



Medicinal scented soaps

A coarse paper box contains three hand-made organic soaps. Each is scented using ingredients from traditional medicine, such as wormwood, cypress, fleece flower root, red adzuki beans and ginger. Each box sells for 185 yuan.

While expensive imported essential oils are extremely popular these days, few people remember that their scents were used in traditional Chinese herbal medicines. By making them into soaps, they still retain some of their medicinal effects. They can be applied on the hair, face and body.

Grid-notebook mugs

Grid notebooks used to be omnipresent in Chinese schools. For foreigners, they are a classic symbol of Chinese culture. For designers, the solid lines, white and red colors are simple and elegant. The mugs cost 89 yuan.



Photos provided by Guo Yangyang

Luxury dining up in the air

By Annie Wei

This is a city with a wide spectrum of dining options. No one who has tried 5-mao *shaobing* in the morning, lunched with colleagues in a hutong courtyard, had 25-yuan coffee from an artsy cafe in the afternoon, spent 2,000 yuan for a romantic dinner with a loved one and had a 400-yuan champagne brunch at a five-star hotel will deny it. These dining experiences can all be memorable in their own way.

Two new restaurants and a bar in the China World Summit Wing, often called Guomao III, add to the city's options in terms of food quality, pricing and the overall dining experience.



Grilled sea scallop, 194 yuan

Grill 79 – the highest dining experience

Lots of fancy hotels have restaurants at the top of their buildings, but Grill 79 – on the 79th floor of Guomao III – has something unbeatable: views that stretch all the way to the Forbidden City and Tian'anmen Square.

Good views stimulate the appetite, and the food helps with that, too. The grilled sea scallop (194 yuan) comes with a decent serving of grilled scallops served beside bacon. It smells uniquely of mustard, green apple and lemon balm. The dish is garnished with small purple lavender and red raspberry.

Transparent Manchgo (138 yuan) is an interesting dish that uses a compressed melon as its base. It features olive oil pudding, piquillo pepper, Marcona almonds and brioche, and is topped with Manchgo cheese.

Black cod (258 yuan) is a very Western dish served with earth distillates, potato, coffee, cocoa and caper.

Two other recommended dishes are Dauphinois potatoes (78 yuan) with Iberian ham, roasted Brie and argula; and fondant potato (78 yuan) prepared with English pea and smoked bacon.

Chef Jean-Paul Lourdes does not want to reveal too much, as the pleasure of dining isn't in reading about it but experiencing the food. Lourdes thinks his food is "sensory cuisine" – the dining experience is meant to surprise and stimulate multiple senses.

The grill also has an extensive wine list with premium selections of New World wines.

Grill 79

Where: 79th floor, No 1 Jiangguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 6:30-10:30 am for breakfast, noon – 2 pm for lunch, 3-5 pm for afternoon tea and 6-10 pm for dinner

Tel: 6505 2299 ext. 6301

Cost: 238 yuan per person for American breakfast, 188-318 yuan per person for lunch and 239-428 yuan per person for dinner. No surcharges.



Steamed rice and scallop in lotus leaves, 249 yuan

Fook Lam Moon – the only Michelin-starred Cantonese restaurant



Roast suckling pig, 800 yuan



Fried crispy chicken, 240 yuan

Fook Lam Moon is a two-star Michelin restaurant that attracts customers who want the finest of Cantonese cuisine.

The restaurant's one simple yet unwavering principle: the taste of the ingredients should be allowed to shine, not overwhelmed by seasonings and artificial flavors.

Fook Lam Moon's signature dishes include braised Japanese dried and aged abalone with goose web; shark fin in Fook Lam Moon stock; fried crispy chicken; roast suckling pig; baked stuffed crab in shell; and a variety of double-boiled soups.

We tried the roast suckling pig (800 yuan for whole pig), which resembled Peking duck in its presentation. An attentive waiter served you two small pieces of the pig skin. Wrap it with scallion, carrot or cucumber and then dip it in sauce or sugar. The skin is very crispy. Then you can start on the meatier parts.

The fried crispy chicken (240 yuan for a whole chicken) has crispy skin and tender meat. However, the specialty of Cantonese chicken lies in its lightness of flavor, which makes it seem very natural. Try eating the dish before stronger flavored ones.

Steamed rice and scallop in lotus leaves (249 yuan) is also delicious, with a strong fragrance of scallops and mushrooms as well as the special fresh smell of lotus leaves.

Fook Lam Moon's dim sum (30-40 yuan) is recommended. Also good is the soup (240 yuan per pot, 50 to 400 yuan per person depending on how fancy you want it), which is prepared for 24 hours with many rare ingredients.

Cantonese barbecue, like *chashao* (roast pork) (55 yuan), is sold for take-out.

The restaurant name means "fortune and blessing comes to your home" in Cantonese. It began gaining its reputation in 1948, when chef Chui Fook Chuen catered lavish dinner parties for the city's tycoons. Today it is still a restaurant known to host business elites, celebrities and socialites.

Fook Lam Moon

Where: 4/F, China World Summit Wing, 1 Jiangguomen Wai Dajie

Open: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm for lunch and 5-10 pm for dinner

Tel: 6505 2299 ext. 6411

Cost: On average, 400 yuan per person for lunch and 2,000 yuan for dinner with 15 percent surcharge

Atmosphere – design matters

At the top of Grill 79, Atmosphere can be a good option for people who want to drink in style.

Unlike Grill 79, Atmosphere has a smart and feminine orientation, with delicate ceiling fixtures and jewel-hued furnishings.

There are telescopes around the bar for customers who want to sightsee. A selection of vintage cocktails, single malts, bourbon, rye whiskies, rum, Cognac and armagnacs are offered at reasonable prices.

Atmosphere

Where: 80th floor, China World Summit Wing, 1 Jiangguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: Sunday to Thursday, noon – 2 am; Friday and Saturday, noon – 4 am

Tel: 6505 2299 ext. 6433

Cost: Average bar prices in CBD area, no surcharges



On the 80th floor

Photos provided by China World Summit Wing

Art as a vehicle for education



Cultivating the Future – The Contemporary Art as a National Education

Where: 706 Factory, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 17, daily except Monday, 10 am – 5 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9861

By He Jianwei

798 Art District may be criticized as too touristy, but the curators of the fourth 798 Art Festival see their latest event as an opportunity to promote the importance of art in ordinary people's lives – tourists included.

"The German artist Joseph Beuys once said 'everyone is an artist.' In my opinion, he's figured out that everyone is capable of creating," said Deng Dafei, co-curator of the festival's theme exhibition. "The function of contemporary art is to educate people and to inspire their own potential for creativity."

Deng and his partner, He Hai, selected 46 artists and art groups from the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Province that explore the function of contemporary art for ordinary people through paintings, sculptures, installations and videos.

Beijing Lijuan Children's Studio is bringing children's paintings about the future of architecture. The studio, founded in 1997 by Wang Lijuan, who received a Master's degree from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, aims to develop children's creativity.

"We hope to offset the disadvantages of China's exam-oriented education system and help kids gain the ability to think independently and express themselves with self-confidence," Wang said.

Artists Chen Zhou and Zhang Xiaojing from Guangdong Province, invited to participate at the festival, have broken the boundaries of art by inviting college students and migrant workers to participate in their project titled, "Enning Lu: A Non-Governmental Observation."

Enning Lu is a 100-year-old street in Guangzhou that's a gateway to traditional Lingnan culture, a blending of Cantonese, Hakka and Teochew. Many relics are located on the street, including an old opera house and the former home of Bruce Lee.

Because of urbanization, the municipal government announced it would renovate the town, causing locals to worry about the future of Enning Lu. Chen and Zhang initiated their project to document the renovation.

"Our artists cannot create works only in studios," Chen said. "Art should intervene with our life, so I prefer to collaborate with non-artists."

"Through the exhibition, we hope the audience learns that contemporary art is not about the market and doesn't have to be hard to understand," Deng said. "It can educate."

Upcoming

Nightlife

Monica Freire

Having grown up in Bahia, the cultural cradle of Brazil and land of Afro-Brazilian music, Freire weaves the nation's folk with modern electronica. Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District When: October 12, 9 pm Admission: 50 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in November

Concert

Vladimir and Vovka Ashkenazy Piano Duet

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: November 12, 7:30 pm Admission: 100-800 yuan Tel: 6655 0000

Joe Hisaishi and China NCPA Concert Hall Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: November 14-15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-880 yuan Tel: 6655 0000

Li Yundi Piano Recital

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: November 12, 7:30 pm Admission: 80-880 yuan Tel: 6551 8058

France's Les Arts Florissants

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaochengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: November 25, 7:30 pm Admission: 50-880 yuan Tel: 6417 7845

Dance

Dance and Love of Devotion

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: November 10-11, 7:30 pm

Admission: 60-160 yuan Tel: 6655 0000

Contemporary Ballet Gala: Moving Rooms

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: November 19-20, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Gecko's The Overcoat

Where: Capital Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: November 5-7, 7:30 pm

Admission: 40-300 yuan Tel: 6524 6789

Tuesdays With Morrie

Where: Oriental Pioneer Theater, 8-2 Dongdan Santiao Wangfujing, Dongcheng District

When: November 12-14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-120 yuan Tel: 6275 8452

(By He Jianwei)

5 Friday, October 8

Exhibition

Shanghai Short Cuts – Barbara Piatti Solo Exhibition

Switzerland-born artist Piatti has inspired many through her journeys to Shanghai, showing the city's architecture and cultures on canvas.

Where: Imagine Gallery, 8 Feijiacun Art District, Laiguangying Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 4, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6438 5747

Nightlife

Christophe Lier

Having lived in Hong Kong since 1994, this French jazz pianist draws inspiration for artistic creation from his dreams.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door
Tel: 6401 4611

Movie

Camino (2008)

Born into a Catholic family, 11-year-old Camino is stricken with cancer and prays every day for her recovery.

Where: Instituto Cervantes, 1 Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 4 pm

Admission: Free (reservation by email necessary)

Email:
cultipek@cervantes.org.cn



CAMINO

6 Saturday, October 9

Exhibition

Measurement of the Other – Contemporary Art from Taiwan

This exhibition presents 10 artists from Taiwan between ages of 26 and 57 who create paintings, sculptures, photos and video installations.

Where: Soka Art Center, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 7, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 4808

Movie

Yes Man (2008)

Banker Carl Allen lives a boring and lonely life after his divorce. When he participates in a personal development program called "Yes Man," which helps people say yes to everything, Allen discovers the magic power of "Yes" and his life changes overnight.

Where: Lady Book Saloon,

69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6270 1928

Nightlife

Cesaria Evora

This popular Cape Verde singer is famous for performing without shoes and regarded as a cross between Edith Piaf and Billie Holiday.

Where: PLA Theater, 60 Deshengmen Nei Dajie (southeast corner of Jishuitan Qiao), Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: Free (advance booking required)
Tel: 6532 0758



7 Sunday, October 10

Exhibition

Tong Zhenggang Contemporary Art Exhibition

This exhibition presents 30 pieces of oil paintings and 10 pieces of sculptures displaying sorrow and happiness in modern life.

Where: Beijing Cocolan Art Center, Building 6, 22 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 9,

daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5807 4911

Movie

Two Great Sheep (2004)

This comedy revolves around Zhao Deshan and his wife Xiuze, who live in a poor, remote village in the mountainous part of Yunnan Province. When the local mayor presents them with two foreign sheep

donated by a former villager, now an official in Beijing, the lives of Zhao and his wife are thrown into upheaval.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife

Bang Bang

This Icelandic pop band founded by songwriter/producer Bardi Johannsson blends electronic elements into its songs.

Where: Mako Livehouse, 36 Guangqun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 120 yuan advance purchase, 150 yuan at the door
Tel: 5205 1112

By Li Zhixin

Many infants get sick, but new research suggests that it may not be a cold but an allergy behind your child's runny, stuffy nose.

A new study found that many infants and toddlers develop nasal allergies, a condition called allergic rhinitis, especially if one of their parents has a history of the bothersome condition.

Infants not immune to allergies

Researchers led by Dr. Isabelle Momas at Paris Descartes University surveyed parents of 1,850 18-month-old children. They also took blood samples from the toddlers to test for biological indicators of nasal allergy.

The team found that 9 percent of the children experienced nasal allergy symptoms during the past year based on reports from the parents.

Toddlers who experienced these symptoms had an increased chance of showing certain biological markers currently associated with allergy. As many as 19 percent had an elevated concentration of inflammatory immune-system cells called eosinophils; 12 percent of the children whose parents reported no allergy-like symptoms also showed elevated concentrations.

When tested, 5.5 percent of the toddlers in the former group were found to have immune system anti-

Helping your baby breathe clear

bodies to an inhaled allergen. Fewer than 3 percent of the other children had these antibodies.

"These results support a hypothesis that allergic rhinitis could begin as early as 18 months into life," Momas and her colleagues wrote in the September issue of *Journal of Allergy*.

Momas recommended that doctors consider a diagnosis of nasal allergies in babies and toddlers with persistent symptoms if their parents have similar allergies.

Among the children with allergy-like symptoms in this study, 44 percent had at least one parent with a history of nasal allergies. When researchers accounted for a number of other factors — such as the parents' income level and smoking habits — they found that having two parents with a history of nasal allergies doubled the odds of a toddler having allergy-like symptoms.

However, there are some telltale signs of allergy. If you find one or more of the following symptoms in your baby, there is a great chance the child is allergic to something in his environment:

How to tell the difference

1. It seem like your baby always has a cold. Colds usually wind down in a week to 10 days but allergies don't.

2. Your baby's nose is continually stuffy or running and he breathes

through his mouth.

3. His eyes are itchy, red and watery.

4. He seems to sneeze a lot.

5. The mucus that drains from his nose is clear and thin, as opposed to yellow or greenish and thick.

6. He is constantly wiggling, wiping or pushing his nose up in what doctors call the allergic salute.

7. The skin under his eyes look dark purple or blue, a condition doctors call allergic "shiners."

8. He has a dry cough.

9. His skin is irritated or broken out in an itchy red rash.

"Kids with nasal allergies are also more prone to ear infections, asthma and sinus infections," said Wang Ningyu, the otolaryngologist of Chaoyang Hospital.

Causes of nasal allergies

The most possible culprits in babies and toddlers are as follows:

1. Dust mites: The microscopic organisms thrive on human skin flakes and are responsible for nearly 85 percent of all allergies.

2. Animal dander: The white, flaky specks made up of skin and hair that cats, dogs and other furry animals shed cause many allergies.

3. Mold: Fungi found in wet, damp places such as bathrooms and basements can be a problem, especially in the fall.

Some children are allergic to down and feather pillows or wool blankets. While most experts don't think children can be allergic to tobacco smoke, it can certainly worsen their symptoms.

"A parental history of nasal allergies should raise the level of suspicion that a young child's symptoms might be related to allergies rather than recurrent colds," Wang said. "The same is true when the child has a history of eczema, an inflammation of the skin triggered in infancy by a food allergen."

Options for treatment

If nasal allergies are suspected, treatment options include antihistamines, inhaled corticosteroids and a medication called cromolyn, all of which can be used in babies as young as six months under a doctor's direction, Wang said.

It does help to curb babies' and toddlers' exposure to the suspected allergen. House dust mites are the most common allergen, so consider covering your child's mattresses with a dust-proof cover.

There are non-drug options as well. Salt-water nasal washes can help clear mucus and inhaled allergens from the nose, but these can be difficult for children to use.

It can take careful detective work and medical tests to pinpoint the exact cause of an allergy.

Mold allergies usually develop during damp or rainy weather and can be hard to dis-

tinguish from colds. Dust mites or pet allergies often cause morning congestion throughout the year, while pollen-related allergies are more common in the spring, summer and fall.

"If you fail to detect the cause of your baby's allergies, go see a doctor for a full checkup. A doctor might suggest a blood test to measure the levels of allergy antibodies in your baby's blood," Wang said.

Blood tests may be less accurate than skin tests, especially for infants. If the blood test suggests an allergy, the next step is a skin test.

During a skin test, a doctor will apply small amounts of common allergens to your child's skin. If your baby is allergic to the substance he will have a reaction similar to a mosquito bite at that spot. Infants may have a weaker reaction than an older child, but the test results can still be helpful.



CFP Photo

Ribbons of the earth

A tour of Ming terraces and experiencing Yao life in Guilin

By Zhang Dongya

Guilin, Guangxi Province is famed for its mountains, lakes and rivers, which are so beautiful that the place is considered "second to none under heaven."

But people shouldn't overlook another marvel of the city, this one man-made: its rice terraces.

Home to hamlets of Yao and Zhuang people, these centuries-old terraces are a grand sight when spied from the side of a mountain. Living with the locals can also be a rewarding experience that purges you of all the stress of city life.



Da Zhai is a big Yao village located at the foot of Jinkeng Terrace.

Photos by Mockingbird

Ming terraces in Longsheng

Located northwest of Guilin, Longsheng County has the largest area of terraces. It is about two hours by bus from Guilin to Longsheng and another 50 minutes to the foot of the terraces.

The winding road to Longsheng is arduous. Occasionally, visitors will encounter sections of road obstructed by fallen rocks. But the deep gorges with lush vegetation and waterfalls provide enjoyable scenery for the journey.

Construction of the terraces began during the Yuan Dynasty (1203-1368) and was completed during the early Qing (1644-1911). The Ming (1368-1644) did the majority of the construction, working on it

for 400 years.

The terrace cascades from an altitude of 1,180 meters at their peak down to 380 meters. From the foot of the mountain, the rice terrace spirals upward in marvelous circular patterns.

During the spring, the terrace circles are filled with water, which resemble silver bands of mountain. During harvest time, cattle dot the fields, and villagers can be seen transporting rice seedlings.

Summertime is the growing season, and green seedlings can be seen waving in the wind. Autumn is the best time to view the terrace, which turns golden.

It only snows once or twice a year in Longsheng, but if you happen to be around when it does, consider yourself lucky. Some photographers stay in the

mountains for weeks to wait for snowfall.

The ascent

The terrace area is separated into tourism districts. The most popular parts are the Jinkeng Terrace and Ping'an Terrace.

Scenic spots are mostly scattered at various mountain peaks, where you can see the terrace alongside villages and hamlets.

Visitors are suggested to stay overnight in the village, as the terraces are too big to explore in one day.

Longsheng terrace is mainly home to Yao and Zhuang people. Jinkeng has more than 20 Yao villages, with small ones containing only a couple dozen of households – Jinkeng is more popular because it's at a higher elevation – and Ping'an is a Zhuang village.

Da Zhai (Big Village) and Tiantou Vil-

lage are the bigger Yao villages. Da Zhai, on the foot of a terrace, has many hotels and small restaurants opened by locals. Most visitors choose to lodge in Zhuangjie, a village halfway up the mountain.

Tiantou Village is located near the top of the mountain and takes an hour to get to from the base. It is more tranquil to live in Tiantou and also convenient for heading to other sites at the peak.

There are three scenic spots in Jinkeng Terrace, simply named Spot No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3.

Tiantou Village is close to Spot No. 2, which features Qianceng Tianti (Thousand Layers to Heaven). Since No. 1 and No. 3 are in a completely different direction, most visitors choose No. 2 as their first destination.

Continued on page 21...



Climbing up the mountain offers a grand view of Yao villages.



It is common to see Yao women combing their long hair outside their doors.



Stone-paved roads built by locals are convenient for visitors looking to hike.



Elderly Yao women spin old wooden looms to make handicrafts that visitors can buy.



Going up and down the terrace is an everyday routine for Yao people.



Locals live in suspended buildings constructed from firs that grow in the mountains.

... continued from page 20

From Tiantou Village, it takes about an hour to reach the No. 1 Scenic Spot, Xishan Shaoyue (Music from Paradise). The roads are stone paths built by locals, flat and wide enough for hiking. A small store sells local handicrafts. Visitors stopping by can view the beautiful slopes and take pictures.

On clear days, you can watch the sunrise and sunset. No. 1 is the best place to watch the sunrise, but be sure to get there before 6 am.

The road to No. 3, Jinfo Ding (Golden Buddha Peak), has not been completed. There is only a dirt road that's used by locals, and it can be arduous. Also, there are no signs to direct your way as before, so visitors are advised to follow a local. No. 3 is said to be the best place to view the terrace, where you can see slopes of seedlings with clouds and mist in the distance.

Coming down from No. 3, you will pass Damao Jie, a small Yao village that leads to other major villages such as Da Zhai and Tiantou Village.

Yao people's lives

The Yao make it easy to learn about their culture in Longsheng.

Middle-aged women await visitors at

the entrance of Yao villages. They wear parceled headdresses, bright-colored tops and black skirts. Their delicate silver ornaments like heavy earrings and bracelets are striking. All carry a basket on their back and help visitors carry their bags up the mountain for 15 yuan.

Going up and down the terrace is an everyday routine for Yao people. Average tourists might run out of breath climbing the mountain, but even the eldest villagers can make the trek without breaking a sweat.

Locals live in suspended buildings constructed from firs that grow in the mountains. Men chop the trees and process them into timber and roll them down to the village. Almost all the men in Yao villages are carpenters who process wood and construct their own houses. Some of them also do carpentry work for neighboring villages to earn money.

Elderly women can be seen spinning old wooden looms. They make and sell handicrafts like cloth purses.

To Yao people, the Clothes Drying Festival on the sixth month and sixth day of the lunar calendar is the most important festival. Married women have to carry their children and gifts like wine jars and ducks and

chickens to visit their parents. Yao people sing and dance, and typical local activities include sawing wood, spinning looms and washing their long hair.

It is common to see Yao women combing their long hair at the door. Yao women wear their hair long in accordance with an ancient tradition that considers hair a person's second life. The women cut their hair only once, when they are 18, to signal the arrival of adulthood. But they will keep their sheared hair and comb it together with the hair on their head.

Some women's hair is longer than a meter. They wear it coiled on the top of their head, and though it's heavy, they say they've gotten used to it. Usually they wash the hair every two or three days. Their secret to keeping their hair nourished is that they wash using rice instead of shampoo.

Huangluo Yao Village, where 60 women wear their hair at longer than 1.4 meters, is listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

Today, many young women do not wear their hair long or wear typical Yao clothes. They sport T-shirts and jeans, just like other people their age. It's a sign of the changing of times, and it's uncertain how long traditional Yao customs will survive.

Travel information

Getting there: Flights to Guilin take about three hours. The fastest train can get you there in 23 hours. From Guilin, take a one-hour coach to Longsheng County, which costs 27 yuan. Transfer to another coach that'll take you to the terrace in about an hour (9 yuan). Coaches returning from the terrace directly to Guilin cost 40 yuan.

Admission to Jinkeng and Ping'an terrace: 50 yuan

Accommodation:

Hotels in Yao villages offer standard rooms for 60 yuan per day. The facilities are just fine, with private bathroom. Prices will double during peak travel times such over as October holiday.

Visitors should choose to have dinner at the hotels, which are made by Yao people. Local flavors include seasonal vegetables, white melon and homemade rice wine.

Longsheng Terrace, built during Ming Dynasty, offers different sights during different seasons. Photos by Mockingbird



Dining



Simply dim sum

This autumn, dim sum lovers have new choices at Zen5es. Come enjoy traditional regional cooking blended with haute Cantonese techniques. There will be new dim sum offerings in each category. Pass-around service enables guests to choose with comfort.

Where: Zen5es, The Westin Beijing Chaoyang, 7 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5922 8880



"Catch Me If You Can" seafood

Come for Vasco's for "Catch Me If You Can," a festival of the senses with fresh delicacies from the sea. The Portuguese Seafood Buffet, presented by Chef Ricardo Bizzaro, features an array of succulent authentic Portuguese seafood delights such as roasted codfish with extra virgin olive oil, half-grilled lobster for one with spicy coconut sauce, Portuguese Acorda, a mashed bread with seafood and coriander, and Pasteis de Bacalhau, deep fried Portuguese Bacalhau cake.

Where: Vasco, Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Jie, Dongcheng District
When: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm, 5:30–9:30 pm
Cost: 208–238 yuan, includes soft drinks and juice (15 percent gratuity)

International buffet

To its existing lineup of Southeast Asian and international fare like spaghetti, sushi, sashimi, fresh salads, desserts, Movenpick ice cream and other delicious choices, Cafe Noir is adding new dishes to its popular Weekend Buffet Brunch – still priced 118 yuan per person with free soft drinks.

Where: Cafe Noir, 2 Dongsihuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm (Saturdays and Sundays)
Tel: 5907 8416

Elements' lunch buffet

Elements offers a lunch buffet with five live kitchens that showcase a range of cooking techniques: grilling, roasting, steaming, boiling, baking, frying, tossing and pouring. Diners can wander between the different cooking stations to select appetizers, main dishes and desserts.

With the most creative Pan-Asian Cuisine and personalized service, there is never a dull dining moment at Elements.

Where: Elements, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: before November 30, 11:30 am – 2:30 pm (Monday – Friday)
Cost: 188 yuan (15 percent gratuity)
Tel: 5865 5020



Seafood extravaganza

Dive into a meal of fresh oysters, lobsters, crabs, mussels and prawns at the weekend seafood buffet dinner at The Ritz-Carlton Financial Street. Tantalize your taste buds with an appetizer spread with fresh salad greens, sashimi, sushi and a hearty selection of soups. Afterward, satisfy your appetite with a range of barbecued meats that include suckling pig and Beijing roast duck. Every guest will be served a Boston lobster or a King Sea scallop.

Where: The Ritz-Carlton Financial Street, 1 Jinchengfang Dong Jie, Financial Street, Xicheng District
When: 5:30-9:30 pm (Friday and Saturday)
Cost: 328 yuan adults, 164 yuan children (6-12 years), includes free soft drinks, coffee, tea, juices, house wines and vodka from the caviar station.

Tel: 6629 6990

Ethic eats

Valley Cafe is offering five themed buffets this month, including Asian, European, Mediterranean and American barbecue, from Monday to Sunday. Come for a new culinary adventure each day of the week. Receive a complimentary hairy crab with your purchase of a semi-buffet lunch or dinner.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District
Cost: 118 yuan for lunch, 188 yuan for dinner (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 5993 8888

SIA Cargo sends pandas to Singapore

Singapore Airlines is the official carrier of the giant panda collaboration between Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) and the China Wildlife Conservation Association. WRS and Singapore Airlines recently signed a sponsorship agreement under which the airline will transport pandas to Singapore and provide air tickets for training and exchange programs.

Under the agreement, Singapore Airlines Cargo will operate a special freighter flight to transport the pair of pandas from Chengdu to Singapore in the second half of 2011. Air tickets will be provided on Singapore Airlines and SilkAir flights for zookeeper, veterinarian and researcher training.

Hotel



JW Marriott Shanghai opens virtual meeting room

A new Marriott studio for virtual meetings, built in cooperation with AT&T and Cisco Tele-Presence, is available now at JW Marriott Tomorrow Square in Shanghai. The studio connects with seven other virtual meeting studios at Marriott locations around the world, as well as with other public Cisco TelePresence suites and the more than 100 companies and organizations that are part of AT&T Business Exchange.

Located on the 5th floor together with the rest of the hotel's meeting facilities, the studio is available 24 hours a day and comes equipped with high-definition video, real-time audio and an interior design consistent with other virtual meetings studios. Rent starts at \$500 (3,300 yuan) per hour, but arrangements can be made for bulk use.

For more information visit Marriott.com/VirtualMeetings.

Bookings can be arranged online at VirtualMeetingsbyMarriott.com.

Event

Pop and jazz singer

Allie Webb

Aria is proud to present vocalist Allie Webb, who will be the restaurant's new singer until January 31, 2011. Webb, who studied musical theater under greats like Kenny Burrell, Gerald Wilson and Michele Weir, has both beauty and brains. The UCLA grad will be performing six nights a week at Aria, and is enthusiastic about sharing her sound with an Asian audience.

Where: Aria, China World Hotel, 1 Jianqiuomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm – midnight (Mondays-Thursdays), 9 pm – 1 am (Fridays and Saturdays)

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 6644



Aviation

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Fo Guang Shan, a holy place to find yourself



By Zhao Hongyi

Dan, a professor of social sciences at Peking University, is one of my best friends, and we regularly meet once a month to discuss what we have done and what troubles us.

The other day, we met at Dan's house near his university. He told me about his trip to Taiwan Province in August, devoting particular attention to Fo Guang Shan Monastery.

The monastery is a huge site of schools and Buddhist temples. He made a friend with a practicing Buddhist, and lived and studied with him for a week.

"I discussed the religion with him throughout the week," Dan told Sam and I. Sam is an American and a good friend of ours who works as the editor of an English magazine in Beijing.

"What are you two sitting there jangling about day and night?" Sam asked.

"We were in the dormitory, not in the jungle!" Dan said.

"You misunderstood," Sam explained. "I'm asking what the two of you discussed."

"I was amazed that a religion could develop on such a huge scale," Dan said. "The monastery has more than 10,000 people practicing Buddhism and they have over 100 branches throughout the island."

Fo Guang Shan Monastery was created by Hsing Yun in the 1950s. In the past six decades, it has developed into a comprehensive place with temples, universities, colleges, libraries, publishing houses, art galleries, tearooms, medical clinics, children's homes, retirement homes and even a TV station.

"More interestingly, there are so many people on the island who believe in Buddhism," Dan said, "and they approach

Buddhism for relief whenever they meet pressures, difficulties and problems."

"You mean nearly all the residents on the island have become junkies of the religion?" Sam asked.

We were all confused again by Sam's word, "junkies."

"I'm wondering if all the people have an addiction of Buddhism," Sam explained. "We used to use the word to describe heroin addicts, but we use the word more frequently referring to those with an addiction."

Dan and I strongly opposed Sam's attitude and the word he used. "You cannot use such a word to describe a sincere Buddhist," I said.

"I can't say what they do is always necessary and good business," Dan said, "but I'm deeply touched and moved. You can do anything as long as you persist and do your best."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Help! Man trapped between urine!

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

Wow. There isn't much more you can say about that, now is there? I really don't even want to go there. You know, we hear stories of what goes on in the men's washroom ... I have never seen it put out there quite so clearly, but Chinese is pretty direct sometimes.

If you are new to China, the character for "female" (Nǚ) looks like a woman, walking proud, chest thrust out, confident in her prowess. The character for "male" (nan) – the first one on this sign – has the character for "field" on top and "power" on the bottom. I know, ladies, I know. Sigh. But only 50 years ago or so, men were truly manly, out in the fields, laboring hard



to keep their woman. They were not trying to be all sensitive and metrosexual, exercising computer-game thumbs and beer-drinking flexors.

Some people call this "modern"

and "progressive," but I think the jury is still out.

Don't be fooled by the second character. It isn't *tu* (earth); it is *shi*, and the two together, *nanshi*, denotes "gentlemen." The next two characters, *xiaobian*, means "pee." So, "men" and "urine" are translated correctly, although a bit too directly for my taste. So what happened with *jian*, the final character?

Jian is the word for "room." My co-worker tells me that *jian* also has the meaning "in between." Thus, we all have a huge laugh at the expense of some translator who probably did the best he or she could.

Or maybe that person is hanging out at a public toilet near you.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. There is the reason to think so.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): When I was a student, my professor, Ge Chuangui, told us that the most difficult part of English is learning when to use definite and indefinite articles and when to leave them out altogether. Here is an example. You may think that this sentence is perfect. However, there is a mistake that makes it sound unnatural. The culprit is "the" before the word "reason." Idiomatically, perfect English should be: There is reason to think so. In many cases, "reason" goes without a definite article when it has an abstract sense. For instance, you may have: I'm getting annoyed, and with reason. He came to reason. There is a great deal of reason in his advice. However, when "reason" means something concrete, it will take an article. For instance: What was the reason for him being late? It is indeed a good reason to act soon.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): The real problem with language learning is that you just have to study it, learn it, know it. Whether you have a good teacher or a poor teacher, it is important to study well – and with reason: the reason to study well at the beginning is to make things easier for yourself in the long run. That is a very good reason!

2. She could be seen in tears when her face was briefly exposed to the view.

ZS: This sentence has the same problem with the previous one. The right way to say this is: She could be seen in tears when her face was briefly exposed to view. The phrase "exposed to view" goes without the definite article. Why? The most essential reason is that "view" here takes an abstract sense, it is not the view of any particular person or groups of persons. I give you another example: The ill practices were brought to light after a thorough investigation. Beautiful scenes of forests of trees in magnificent autumn yellow came into view as we drove into the valley. The students are exposed to rigorous military training when they go to the army barracks.

TBZ: "To the view" (in the example) would mean the opposite: someone has briefly lifted the blindfold from the subject's eyes. However, it would be best to add a specific view: The princess could be seen (by the observer) in tears when her face was briefly exposed (from behind the curtain) to the view (of her prince in the beautiful witch's embrace).

3. An elderly man fills in the village head.

ZS: The phrase "fill in" is wrongly used here. As we know, "fill in" means "to fill with something; to put in"; for instance, They filled in the cracks with putty. He fills in a traffic ticket. He fills in the date of an application. It may also mean "to supply a person with new or additional information; to brief"; for instance, A spokesman filled in reporters on the properties of the vaccine. However, all these do not fit the sentence. As a matter of fact, it means "to be a substitute." In this case, it should be "fill in for somebody." The right way to say it should be: An elderly man fills in for the village head. It means an elderly man is taking the place of the village head. I'll give you another example: The regular teacher is sick so Miss Jones fills in for her.

TBZ: Yes, the example is very funny! The way it is written creates a picture of an extra-large hollow head, an actual head, with its hinged door opened wide, and an elderly man in dark blue international peasant garb busily shoveling dirt into it. It reminds me of something from a Gary Larson *Far Side* comic. And, unbeknownst to the poor man, the dirt is trickling out the nose just as fast as it's shoveled in. The image fills our heads with ideas about the futility of life – or something like that.

500 Days of Summer (2009)

Movie of the week

500 Days of Summer is an intriguingly original take on falling in love. It captures every emotion of a new relationship, from the strange and quirky aspects of new love to the tragedy of heartbreak. The writers created one of the most immensely beautiful and original screenplays to come along in a while, and director Marc Webb lends this film his characteristic comedy.

Synopsis

After it looks as if she has left his life for good this time, Tom Hansen reflects on the 500 days he knew Summer Finn. Despite being physically average in almost every respect, Summer always attracted the attention of men: Tom included.

For Tom, it was love at first sight when she walked into the greeting card company where he worked as the new administrative assistant. He knew she was the woman with whom he wanted to spend the rest of his life, but Summer did not believe in relationships or boyfriends. For her, real life would ultimately get in the way.

Tom and Summer quickly became more than just friends, and when their relationship was on the rocks he could always count on the advice of his best friends, McKenzie and Paul. But this time, it's Tom's adolescent sister Rachel who is his voice of reason.



Scene 1

(The voice-over tells Summer's story.)

Voice-over: Summer Finn was a woman. Height, average. Weight, average. Shoe size, slightly above average. For all intents and purposes, Summer Finn was just another girl. Except she wasn't.

To wit (1), in 1998, in her high school yearbook. Summer quoted a song by the Scottish band Belle and Sebastian, "Color my life with the chaos of trouble." The spike in Michigan sales of their album *The Boy with the Arab Strap* continues to puzzle industry analysts.

Summer's employment at the Daily Freeze during her sophomore year coincided with an inexplicable 212 percent increase in revenue. Every apartment Summer rented was offered at an average rate of 9.2 percent below market value. And her round-trip commute to work averaged 18.4 double takes (2) per day.

It was a rare quality, this "Summer effect." Rare, and yet something every post-adolescent male has encountered at least once in their lives. For Tom Hansen to find it now in a city of 400,000 offices, 91,000 commercial buildings and 3.8 million people, well, that could only be explained by one thing: fate.

Scene 2

(At the office party, Tom, McKenzie and Summer talk about love.)

McKenzie (M): So, do you have a boyfriend?

Summer (S): No.

M: Why not?

S: 'Cause I don't want one.

M: Come on, I don't believe that.

S: You don't believe that a woman could enjoy being free and independent?

M: Are you a lesbian?

S: No, I'm not a lesbian. I just don't feel comfortable being anyone's girlfriend. I don't actually feel comfortable being anyone's anything, you know.

M: I don't know what you're talking about.

S: Really?

M: Nope.

S: OK. Let me break it down (3) for you. I like being on my own. Relationships are messy, and people's feelings get hurt. Who needs it? We're young. We live in one of the

most beautiful cities in the world. Might as well have fun while we can and save the serious stuff for later.

M: Holy s---t. You're a dude. She's a dude.

Tome (T): But wait, wait. What happens if you fall in love?

S: Well, you don't believe that, do you?

T: It's love. It's not Santa Claus.

S: Well, what does that word even mean? I've been in relationships, and I don't think I've ever seen it. And most marriages end in divorce these days. Like my parents. OK.

T: Mine too, but ...

M: Me thinks the lady doth protest too much.

S: There's no such thing as love. It's a fantasy.

T: Well, I think you're wrong.

S: OK. Well, what is it that I'm missing then?

T: I think you know it when you feel it.

Scene 3

(Toms talks with his younger sister Rachel at her soccer game.)

T: So, what should I do?

Rachel (R): You should ask her.

T: Well, why rock the boat (4), is what I'm thinking. I mean, things are going well. You start putting labels on it, that's like the kiss of death. It's like saying, "I love you."

R: Yeah, I know what you mean. That's what happened between me and Sean.

T: Who the hell's Sean?

R: My boyfriend before Mark.

T: Who the ... Never mind. So, what are you saying?

R: I'm saying you do want to ask her. It's obvious. You're just afraid you'll get an answer you don't want, which will shatter all

the illusions of how great these past few months have been. Now look, if it were me, I'd find out now before you show up at her place and, well, she's in bed with Lars from Norway.

T: Who's Lars from Norway?

R: Just some guy she met at the gym with Brad Pitt's face and Jesus' abs. Look, it's easy, Tom. Just don't be a pussy.

Vocabulary

1. to wit: that is to say; namely

2. double take: a delayed reaction to a remarkable situation

3. break something down: here it means to explain

4. rock the boat: to cause trouble

(By Wang Yu)